



Recommendations for the  
development of  
Carrickmacross Market.

Office Location:

**Bushfield House || Bushfield  
Square || Philipsburgh Avenue ||  
Fairview || Dublin 3**

IOMST.ie

Prepared by: Greg Quinn

Contact Ph: 01-8360945

Private & Confidential

E&OE.

## About IOMST

IOMST was established in 1994 by two Market Traders in order to form a representative body representing the sector from a number of perspectives which include the following:-

1. Assistance in understanding market rights & responsibilities.
2. Advice in respect of setting up a market/becoming a trader.
3. Information on events/markets etc
4. Liaising with local authorities, private business and public bodies in relation to advice, assistance and education in relation to market trading, rights and benefits.
4. Provision of a liability insurance scheme to eligible market/street traders and market operators/organisers.

## Background to Carrickmacross Market:

The Carrickmacross Market operates each Thursday on Main Street in Carrickmacross. The market represents a typical casual trading market similar to many other such markets which operate throughout the country on a designated "market day" each week.

## Current location of Carrickmacross Market:

The market currently occupies a number of trading bays adjacent to the main street between Chapel Lane and Farney Street. This area is ordinarily used as parking spaces on non-trading days. Currently these bays have the capacity to accommodate approximately 30 traders.

## Current difficulties experienced:

IOMST were contacted in relation to a challenging trading environment currently being experienced by the market. These centred around a slow business environment which had resulted in a number of traders leaving the market as they felt it was no longer financially viable to remain in place. This has subsequently led to a fragmented and disparate appearance which discourages further visitors and additional traders from attending, further damaging the appearance and reputation of the market as an attractive trading venue.

IOMST representatives Grainne Quinn and Greg Quinn visited the market on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2017 accompanied by Caitriona Lazdauskas of Monaghan County Council and were given the opportunity to view the market in operation and speak to a number of traders in relation to their concerns. Based on this visit and the observations on the day, we have come up with the following recommendations for the development and improvement of the market.

## Recommendations:

### **Increased Visibility:**

A market comprises an eclectic mix of individual traders but there is always a collective name by which the market is known, often with historic roots. Although a market is often the single largest retailer within a town centre, it usually has the least retail identity. A recognisable identity registers a trustworthy, easily identifiable image in the minds of shoppers and visitors.

It was noted that while the market occupies a prime location on a busy main street, the market itself is not clearly visible to passing traffic. Due to the layout of the trading bays, many traders' stalls face away from the main street itself and as such it may not be evident to passing motorists that a market is present and taking place. While a situation whereby the market faces out towards the passing public is a potential option, we feel that the current layout would not readily accommodate this.

As such, it is advised that some form of visual advertisement be employed on market days, preferably along the roadside in the form of swooper flags or another similar medium. Good signage is essential, whether it's directional signage, an entrance sign or banners for an outdoor market.

### **Increased Profile:**

Successful markets play an important role in attracting shoppers to a town or city centre for their diversity of offer, quality of their produce and sense of community and traditional values. A good market can be as much of a unique selling point for a destination as a failing one can reflect its weaknesses. In a competitive retail arena, markets must reinvent themselves to meet modern expectations. It is no longer enough to rely on a historical reputation.

The market itself appears to have little or no information publicly available on its operation, organisation or composition. This could be greatly improved with the addition of a small section on the local authority website which would contain information on trading hours, procedure for applying to trade, contact details etc. This would not only give the market a very cost effective online presence (of which there is none at present) but would give potential traders an insight into the requirements to trade and notice of any trading opportunities. IOMST would be happy to assist in this respect with a free listing on our website.

A small advertisement in a local newspaper would also be of benefit, particularly if an effort is to be made to include more local traders and producers. This could involve a targeted approach at set times of the year to attract specific, seasonal traders (subject to licensing requirements).

### **Increased Variety of Traders:**

While the market does have a reasonable variety of traders, this could be improved upon in a number of ways. Currently there is lack of traders selling hot food, local produce, arts and crafts and items of this type. While there is always a necessity for a successful market to feature staple items such as clothing and flowers/plants most also feature a variety of more varied traders.

Home baked goods, locally produced fruit and vegetables, jams and preserves would not only diversify the range of goods sold but also allow local producers to showcase their goods. This approach often proves extremely beneficial to increasing local goodwill towards the market as a whole when local traders are evident in attendance.

### **Review of Licence Structure**

A local authority's bye-laws may provide for the fixing of different fees in respect of licences for different circumstances and for different classes of persons. Certain local authorities issue different licences for persons selling different categories of products, and charge different fees for each licence type. Some even specify the number of licences available for each class of product. In most cases this is due to the local authority's desire to have a variety of products sold at markets in its functional area, to increase the attractiveness of the market to consumers and/or to negate the impact of competition on permanent businesses selling directly competing products.

It is not clear that this direct intervention into the competitive conditions of the local market is warranted. At the very least, it should only be undertaken in direct response to objective measures of consumer demand such as consumer surveys. If consumers prefer to have, for example, more flowers being traded at a market, traders will apply in greater numbers for a casual trading licence to sell flowers. Similarly, if there are more jewellery traders than is necessary to meet demand, the least efficient and/or least popular jewellery traders will go out of business and no longer apply for licences. Thus, the market will naturally tend towards the mix of products that is actually preferred by consumers (as opposed to someone's prediction of consumer preferences). Furthermore, if consumers prefer to buy certain products from casual traders than from a local permanent business, the local business should not be protected from such competition by limiting the number of rivals it has to compete with.

### **Parking:**

As noted during our visit, the current dispersed nature of the market has led to some issues surrounding car parking, particularly in the southern end of the road in the vicinity of Markey's Bar. Priority should be given to filling the trading bays immediately adjacent to the Main Street roadside as this will then help prevent the current situation of members of the public reversing in close proximity to traders and customers. Isolation of this area from vehicular traffic until the trading bays have been sufficiently occupied by stallholders is advised, ideally using some form of control barrier which would effectively funnel cars into the overflow car park through O'Duffy's archway.

### **Open Trading Day:**

Along with the permanent traders, a number of local authorities have instigated set trading days throughout the year whereby they accept applications from unlicensed (but insured) stallholders. It is a great opportunity to test new products and designs and to meet potential customers. It also allows stallholders to investigate whether a particular market is suitable for their products without going through the formal Casual Trading licence application route. The dates can be set to coincide with high profile local events to maximise exposure. IOMST can assist in publicising such an event.

### **Review of Casual Trading Fees:**

Casual trading licence fees vary hugely from local authority to local authority. Large differences in licence fees across local authorities, and especially where fees are very high, can create mobility problems for traders. If traders are restricted in their movements from market to market, local temporal peaks in demand may go unsatisfied.

The higher the licence fee charged by the local authority, the less attractive it is to the traders and so areas with high licence fees tend to have lower numbers of licensed traders, and vice versa, i.e. a negative relationship exists. Demand for casual trading licences in an area depends on a number of factors apart from the fee charged in that area. These include the area's population density (number of potential customers), the average income/wealth of the local population, facilities provided by the local authority, and licence fees in other areas. If there is low demand for casual trading licences in an area, e.g. because of low population density in the area, the local authority will have an incentive to keep the licence fee low to encourage casual traders into the area. Similarly, if demand for casual trading licences in an area is high, e.g. because it is a well-run market that attracts many customers, a local authority will have an incentive to increase the licence fee (until the number of applicants matches the number of pitches in the area), i.e. there also exists a positive relationship.

The demand for casual trading licences in an area depends on a number of factors such as: population density, average income, location of designated trading area (if any), facilities provided, and the licence fee for the area. One method of ensuring an efficient allocation of the licences is for the local authority to raise and lower the fee level until the demand for licences exactly matches the supply of pitches in the area - a demand-based method. This method for setting fees would also be a proportionate response to the objective of good regulation; it ensures an efficient allocation of pitches to those who value them most.

## Potential Challenges:

While it was advised to us that there was no history of conflict between the market/traders and local businesses, unfortunately this is commonplace especially when a market attempts to redevelop or expand beyond its original confines.

We have identified a number of areas of expansion, particularly around the increased variety of traders, which we feel would be of particular benefit to the future viability of the market.

It is however worth noting that with these potential plans may come increased opposition from local business who may view these plans as directly impacting their own trade. In particular we have noted several businesses along Main Street whose operation should be considered should certain categories of trader be placed. Businesses noted as being potential objectors have been a bakery, fruit & vegetable shop and local cafe/restaurant.

It should be noted that despite a traditional opposition to market expansion from local businesses, many studies have proven the complimentary economic benefits of market trading to local business. Casual Trading adds character to town centres and in most areas, the chambers of commerce welcome casual trading because it attracts shoppers into the town. This in turn leads to an increase in business for retailers, as shoppers will go into permanent traders' shops while they are in the area. In other words, the Chambers view the casual traders as complementary to local permanent businesses.

Some permanent businesses do not welcome casual traders, as they feel that they face direct competition from such traders, many of whom, they feel, do not contribute to the upkeep of the town. These businesses are mainly fruit and vegetable shops or florists, who face direct competition from many casual traders selling similar products. The potential for such conflict can be minimised through the sensitive location of traders in relation to competing businesses. Indeed the Dublin Chamber of Commerce stated that very little conflict arises between casual traders and local businesses, unless a trader sets up a stall outside a shop selling the same merchandise or blocks entry to a shopping entrance.

The fact that private markets are becoming increasingly popular in Ireland - is an important one. If local authorities neglect their duties by failing to implement bye-laws or if they apply the Act disproportionately, there is likely to be a rise in the number of private markets. As a result, local businesses may suffer if the private market is not positioned so that shoppers also visit permanent businesses. Thus, the long term effect of poor implementation of the Act by some local authorities is likely to be the demise of casual trading and a negative impact on the local economies of these areas.

## Conclusion:

Casual trading markets can benefit the local and regional economy (a) by bringing (often regionally-produced) goods near to the shopping public and (b) by generating direct and indirect employment. Markets are intensive in the creation of employment, when compared with other commercial forms such as supermarkets. They also promote entrepreneurship as they provide a relatively low cost avenue for testing a new product or entering an existing retail product market.

Our observations to date give great optimism for the future of Carrickmacross Market. Unlike many similar markets throughout the country, Carrickmacross enjoys an enviable position on a bustling main street location in a thriving market town and, crucially, the enthusiastic support of the local council.

Careful coordination and engagement with local business interests and the continued support of the local authority will be vital to ensure the development of the market into the future. With over 20 years experience dealing with such issues, IOMST are prepared to offer any advice, support and assistance in this regard to further the success of the market.

We would welcome any feedback from traders, local business and Monaghan County Council in respect of this report and would advise that a further review be taken within 6 – 12 months of any substantial implementation of these recommendations to observe their effects and advise on any additional measures which may be required at that stage.