

Meeting Minutes
15th January 2019



Present

Rob Angell, Xpressofix (Chair)
Tanya Levy, Levant (Vice-Chair)
Amie Hancock, therapeutic counsellor, Blackford
Beverley, EAT festivals
Claire Brooker, Bailey Hill Bookshop
Dave Marsh, Dave Marsh Hardware
Deb Pateman, Secrets
George Cronk, George's Greengrocer
Georgia, Beauté Shed, Sparkford
Heather Burch, Heather's Flowers
Lucas Hollweg, pop-up food
Lucie Reader, pop-up food
Michelle & David, Burns the Bread
Nick Crowley, The Wonderful Garden Company
Nicki Caro, beauty therapist
Penny Steiner, Castle Cary Town Council
Sally Snook, Clanville Manor Farm
Sarah, EAT festivals

Apologies

Helen Higgins, Lighthouse Payroll (Treasurer)
Lou Coombes, Bengrove Market Garden

The Castle Cary EAT festival was the only agenda item at this meeting

Overview

Beverley & Sarah began organising events to bring the community together for the jubilee and royal wedding and have spread from Burnham-on-Sea to several market towns in Somerset. Food brings people together and EAT: festivals are all about bringing together local food / drink producers, local families, local businesses and shops within the town.

EAT met with the Town Council in Jan 2018 and agreed Castle Cary would host a festival on 4th May 2019. They want to engage with local shops and businesses, create a warm and friendly event and hope, through their publicity and social media, to attract 10,000 people across the day.

Q&A

Q: Why does it have to be on a Saturday? It's the busiest day for many businesses.

A: The idea is that people see the town and its businesses open. As well as footfall on the day, visitors will then return on future occasions.

Q: Won't having stalls selling the same produce as the shops just create a price war and potential conflict?

A: The idea is that the event will be good for Cary so it will be tailored to what Cary has to offer. The aim is not to transform shops into market traders. The type and placement of stalls will be considered carefully. Retailers should remember they have standing in the community. They want visitors to remember the service that shops provide.

Q: Is it a travelling market?

A: No. Priority is for local food / drink producers within 25m to showcase their produce. Tuesday market stallholders have been invited to apply.

Q: How can we reassure retailers going forward?

A: Retailers are very welcome to call (07771 665445) or email (hello@eatfestivals.org) with any concerns. EAT will also be sending out further publicity / communication. Chamber happy to disseminate information. SS also happy to post updates on the town's website / FB page.

Q: How many stalls are you anticipating?

A: Don't know yet as only began measuring up today. Current plan is to zig-zag up the middle of the road so as not to obscure shopfronts.

Q: Does there have to be a complete road closure?

A: Yes, to protect both pedestrians and traders.

Q: A number of businesses have two or three deliveries to their shops on a Saturday. How will this work and what time will the roads be shut?

A: The roads will be closed from 7am to 6pm. Expected deliveries much easier to plan for and EAT will work with retailers to help them re-schedule. Co-op, McColls, Dave Marsh, Heather's Flowers, Burns the Bread, Danela's Bakery and the deli all have Saturday deliveries. Likely to be others too. In other towns, regular suppliers have delivered on a different day, come before the road shuts or used an alternative delivery area (eg Woodcock St). EAT can look at which streets they close in order to think about deliveries.

Q: Burns the Bread will loose trade if tradesmen can't pull up outside.

A: Some stallholders will want fresh bread and EAT can put them in touch with the town's bakeries.

Q: Dave Marsh will loose trade if customers can't park outside for heavy items such as compost bags. The Saturday of the spring bank holiday is their busiest day of the year.

A: Need to give customers plenty of warning and encourage them to collect heavier items the weekend / day before. Could put up a notice in the shop and / or post something on Facebook. And / or there could be an arrangement with the scouts to help customers take their shopping to the alternative parking bay. And / or they could load up their van the night before with heavy items and / or store some in the fire station or at George's. George offered to help with deliveries.

Q: What about deliveries out to customers? Heather's Flowers may need to make several deliveries that day.

There would be a designated alternative parking bay to enable those with deliveries to make to get out. See above suggestions too.

Q: If 10,000 people are really expected, where are they all going to park?

A: A big part of EAT's sustainability strategy is to encourage people to walk, cycle or take the bus / train. In the past this has proved very successful. But will also look at additional parking. Suggestions include Caryford Hall, Ansford Academy, Fairfield (maybe for producers).

Q: Aren't the pitch fees prohibitive for small local traders?

A: Stalls are there to raise their profile and sell their produce, not to make money for the organisers. There are three different fees

- high risk (produce wasted if not sold on the day) = £50 for 3m
- low-risk (ambient goods) = £65 for 3m
- high sales (eg hot food) = £100 for 3m

The fees are around 25% of other similar events and about 15% higher than farmers markets. There is also a bursary for new traders. Generally EAT is over-subscribed by 300% which suggests the pitch fees are not too high.

Q: How can non-food shops get involved?

A: Shops can spill out onto the pavement outside, think of ways to encourage visitors to come in, bookshop could do a cookbook window, charity shops could stockpile kitchenalia, other shops could use the language of food, or give out vouchers to show they're a returning customer (could be valid online using a specific code - contact EAT for help with that). If businesses tell EAT, they can publicise it beforehand. Also advertising available in their brochure. EAT will also have mystery shoppers there on the day, looking at product knowledge and customer service. Retailers can ask to be included esp if there's something specific they'd like to look at (eg mobility issues).

Q: How can community groups get involved?

A: EAT likes to work with community groups, both food based ones (eg Eat Cary and the allotments) as well as others as can raise their profile by providing shopping crèche, assisting with deliveries, giving out information etc. Penny could put something in the newsletter. Rotary may like to be involved – Nicky Creed is chair.

Q: What role have CoCs played elsewhere?

A: Chambers have done shop window competitions, put up bunting etc. In Cary, agreed it would be useful to have updates on numbers and types of stalls. This information will be passed on to Rob and the CoC can circulate.

Q: Is the event just on the Saturday?

A: Yes, but it's the regatta on the Monday so there's a good opportunity for the town to do something on Sunday as lots of people will have friends / family staying with them.