



Kirkgate Market Under Threat

- Council plans 25% size reduction
- Hidden agenda to sell off outdoor market land
- 100s of traders could be evicted
- Campaigners slam dodgy evidence
- Traders call for rent cuts

Hands Off the People's Market!

It's the biggest indoor market in Europe, employing 2000 people, generating £2m every year for public services in the city, and serving the people of Leeds since 1875 – but now this is under threat.

Leeds City Council says it wants Kirkgate Market “to be the best market in the UK”. Sadly, the Council’s vision of the future is the stuff of nightmares.

Councillors have approved proposals by controversial consultants, Quarterbridge, to shrink the Market by 25% and have begun the search for a “commercial partner” to take over and redevelop the city’s historic asset.

Kirkgate Market badly needs investment after years of mismanagement and neglect. But it makes no sense to make a profitable service smaller or hand it over to a private company to plunder – look what happened to the Corn Exchange.

Worse, if Quarterbridge’s plans are followed, the outdoor market would disappear and hundreds of traders would be forced out, destroying the Market’s unique role and character.

With local elections looming, the backlash from traders and customers has seen senior councillors appearing to backtrack, saying “nothing has been decided” and the Market “will remain in council ownership”.

However, it is well known that there has been a long-term agenda to redevelop the Market into just another bland, segregated shopping opportunity for a well-heeled elite.

Kirkgate market is one of the few places left in Leeds where people

of all backgrounds rub shoulders while earning a living or doing the weekly shop – it is the People’s Market in a corporate city.

Friends of Leeds Kirkgate Market formed two years ago to protect the market and 10,000 people signed our petition

Join the growing public and trader opposition to these plans – come to our public meeting on 17 April at 6.30pm in Trinity Church, Boar Lane and let’s kick these crazy plans into touch.

Number Crunching
77% of people surveyed want the market to stay the same size
63% of stalls could go

Who's behind these plans?

The Project Board

A small group of senior council officers with a track record in handing over public services and assets to the private sector have been drawing up these plans and making key decisions on the Market's future.

Project Board members include chief officers for asset management, finance, property and public private partnerships. There are no elected councillors or traders, no-one involved in social or health services, no-one speaking on behalf of the many, diverse communities who depend on Kirkgate Market.

These are the same people behind the PFI disasters in schools and housing, the demolition of Leeds International Swimming Pool, the sale of Leeds Bradford Airport – and now the planned Eastgate shopping mall right next to the Market.

These unelected officers have the power to decide what management models are even considered by councillors, what size they think the market should be, and how it should be 'reconfigured' and they get to hand-pick the 'experts' (eg Quarterbridge) to tell us what should happen to our market.

The Markets Manager

Sue Burgess, Markets Manager, recently told a national conference on markets that "privately owned markets have a number of advantages over local council run spaces".

The Councillor

The council line is 'nothing decided' but Markets champion Cllr Gerry Harper told a group of journalists at a press conference "if it was up to me I'd pull down the two lower halls".



Councillor Harper

The Quarterbridge Connection

All these people knew what they were buying when they paid Quarterbridge to advise them. A Quarterbridge consultant accompanied Leeds councillors and market managers on a tour of the Birmingham Bull Ring with Eastgate developer, Hammerson, in May 2011.



From left to right: Jonathan Owen (Quarterbridge), two Hammerson men and Cath Follin (Leeds City Council) with Cllr Gerry Harper behind the camera.

Every Little Helps

Mushrooms, peppers, spring onions, spring greens, cauliflower, courgettes, celery, cherry tomatoes.

Tesco: £10.80

Kirkgate: £4.40



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Quarterbridge Too Far

The plans to shrink Kirkgate Market and hand it over to a private operator were drawn up by a company that specialises in making money from privatising local authority markets, turning them into soulless food halls and turfing out traders.

Quarterbridge Project Management Ltd' was paid £12,400 to come up with the 'optimum' size for the market and put forward alternative ownership and management models to attract private investors.

In just a matter of weeks, they had churned out a 67-page report stating the Market should be redeveloped at a cost of £30million. This 'new' market would be 25% smaller with

What the Market

by Ray Brown

I was born in Thorner. For some years the two most exotic places known to me were Thorner Church and Kirkgate Market. The church I knew from weekly visits, the market by reputation.

Listening to my family (I was the youngest of six) I knew this was the place where you could buy anything, Christmas trees to liquorice. Later I accompanied my mother to Leeds, to a range of shops now long gone, and to the Market. I still remember the excitement of the place, the racket of chatter, laughter, stall-holders cries. And the smell of cut flowers.

At eighteen I went to London, then moved about until 1968 when I came to live in Leeds. Wonder of wonders, the Market was still there, still exotic, still smelling of cut

63% fewer indoor stalls and the outdoor open market relocated inside to enable the land next to the coach station to be redeveloped or sold off.

To pay for this, Quarterbridge cheekily suggested the council put up £10 million but surrender democratic control of the Market for at least 99 years to a 'limited liability partnership' company.

All traders would be served with notices to quit before reapplying to be part of a smaller market with just 100 stalls.

For market traders across the UK the Quarterbridge touch has meant massive rent hikes and being turfed out.

In Blackburn, more than half of the traders chose not to move to the new market when faced with rent increases of between 40% and 160%. And in Stockport, a failure to attract any private investment meant the council and traders were forced to pick up the bill – in some cases rents went up by 300%.

The Quarterbridge blueprint is currently the only vision the council has considered for the future of our Market.

Means to Me

flowers. From the balcony you could still see behind the hardboard facades to the Victorian iron work and stove chimneys. And you could still buy the best produce in the North of England at reasonable prices

Later, when the city spiralled into Victorian gentrification I shuddered. Now I enjoy the flash shops and posing clientele. But the arcades can't compete with the Market as the beating heart of Leeds.

It still offers the best produce in the area, still smells of cut flowers. It is home to our eccentrics and discerning citizens, rich and poor alike. If the council mess it up, they deserve to be tarred, feathered and deported to Milton Keynes.

Ray Brown is a playwright, director and Radio 4 feature maker. He lives in Chapeltown.

Size Matters

After decades of neglect the council has finally agreed to invest in the market – but the cost of the makeover could be a much smaller market no longer for those who need it most.

The council's secret scheme for Kirkgate Market is now out in the open. The plan is to demolish the 1976 and 1981 halls as well as the George Street shops (see map).

Shrinking the Market would be an untold disaster. Fewer stalls would mean:

- ◆ far less choice and diversity
- ◆ higher prices from reduced competition
- ◆ even fewer opportunities in Leeds for small, independent businesses to start up
- ◆ job losses

The council claim that it needs to be smaller because of the number of empty units. On this twisted logic, half of Leeds city centre would have to be demolished.

The Market makes an annual profit of around £2million and has done for years, proving it is a viable public service at its current

size. Empty stalls are caused by an economic downturn affecting small businesses across the world, poor management and the destructive impact of the highest rents for traders in Northern England.

The council claims that the two halls have to be demolished because they are "temporary" and "beyond economic repair". But this is not what the council's own surveyors say – they conclude the Halls are in sound structural condition and just need to be repaired and maintained as any buildings do.

So with no credible reason for shrinking the market, the real motive must be to change the nature and character of our market, making it 'fit' with the gentrified city centre and the proposed Eastgate shopping mall.

Mick, an outdoor trader for 48 years said: "We've always been here to feed and clothe those with the least in Leeds. Not everyone has the

money to shop in the Victoria Quarter or M&S. "What they are planning to do will be the end of the market as we know it and there would be a massive public outcry if they try."



Our Alternative to Privatisation – a Public Trust Owned by the People

The Council has mismanaged and neglected the Market for years, but the solution isn't privatisation or a commercial partnership – our vision is for a publicly-owned and accountable Market service with traders at the heart.

Over and over again, the follies of privatisation and public-private partnerships have been demonstrated. We've seen public bodies sell off public assets and services to private companies without any democratic control. Jobs get cut, rents increase and prices go up. With markets' popularity on the up as other high street retailers struggle, it's even more foolish to transfer control of a profit-making public asset to cut-throat companies who will take that profit out of the city.

We all know there are problems in the market and things must change – rents must fall and a new management style and structure is needed. Here's our plan for giving Kirkgate Market a sustainable future in public hands:

1. Abandon plans to sell off the Market to commercial operators and to shrink the Market – problems are caused by lack of investment and poor management, not public ownership or size
2. Implement Leeds NMTF's (market traders' federation) call for a 50% rent cut for 12 months – as Liz Laughton, Chair of Leeds NMTF says "this will help existing traders invest in their stalls and bring new traders in, and make the market busy and vibrant, increasing the overall rental income".
3. Borrow against the Market's £2m annual profit to repair and invest in the existing buildings – the council admits "using £1m per annum from the Markets income would enable the council to borrow circa £13m over 25 years" and refurbish the Market without the need to part-privatise it.
4. Create an elected management board to run the Market as a public trust with places reserved for traders and councillors – allow this democratic body to devise the best way forward for the Market's future



Not Another Corn Exchange

The Corn Exchange went from a much-loved centre for independent and alternative traders to a half-empty shell after the council sold the lease, but still technically owned the building, and could no longer intervene in 2007 when the commercial operator (Zurich Assurance) decided to turn it into an "international food emporium". Five years on, it has few shops and fewer customers.



Public Meeting
Tues 17th April,
2012, 6.30pm
at Trinity Church, Boar Lane
Come along and hear about
the future of your market
All Welcome



Friends of Leeds Kirkgate Market is a group for everyone who loves the Market.

To get involved, you can:

- Find out more on our blog <http://kirkgatemarket.wordpress.com/>
- Follow us on twitter @ [FriendsofLKM](#)
- Phone us: 07511275896
- EMAIL us: friendsofkirkgatemarket@gmail.com