

**RETAILERS' ASSOCIATION MEETING**  
**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 18**Present

David Jackson	(DJ) Chair The Lanes	Savannah Middleton	(SM) VIP
Cassie Heal	(CH) Secretary/Minutes	Andrea Dawson	(AD) Grape Tree
Holly Woodhead	(HW) Marketing	Fiona Edwards	(FE) Library
Maria Beattie	(MB) Roman	Mark Whiteley	(MW) Debenhams
Anne Charlton	(AC) Eden Valley Hospice	Joseph Delaney	(JD) Swarovski
Claire Garlik	(CG) New Look	Diane Atkinson	(DA) The Perfume Shop

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Ann Summers, Jack & Jones, Peter Jackson, Revd Keith Teasdale & The Fragrance Shop. No other responses received.

**2. Trading Review**

- **Overview**

Footfall for April was 708,700 which was +2.6% on the previous year, and ahead of the national figure which was -1.7%.

Footfall for May was 687,300 +0.2% on last year and the national figure was -2.6%

Year to date (January - May) footfall is 3.52m +3.4% on last year.

In terms of retail performance in April, this was a month of poor weather and an early Easter. The BRC retail sales monitor produced a figure of -4.2% on the previous April which is the sharpest decline on record since sales records began back in 1995. However, in May footfall was good and the retail sales increased 2.8% on a like for like basis, which is the sharpest rise since records began, possibly due to the Royal wedding, good weather and various Cup finals.

Locally, we have had the Victoria Viaduct problem, which has caused a number of large stores in the immediate area to close such as B&M and Tesco; this has possibly encouraged customers to come to this side of the town. We have also had the sad news of House of Fraser closing in the city which we should remember isn't a problem caused by Carlisle, but is a problem across the House of Fraser business. In the long term we will have to wait to find out what will happen to the building, and whether some of the concessions will want high street stores in the city.

**3. Marketing**

Coming up on 22<sup>nd</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> June we have our One Great Day event, as part of this on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June we're having a One Great Sports day, we will have a climbing wall, archery, penalty shoot outs, face painting and other stalls. All money raised will go to Great Ormond Street Hospital and Eden Valley Hospice Jigsaw. We will also be doing our yearly tombola which alone raised nearly £1000 last year; any donations of prizes would be greatly appreciated.

In the centre on the same day we will be running an event separate to One Great Day which involves a blogger from Manchester who will be doing style overhauls ready for the summer holidays, this will be filmed and photographed for online use.

Also on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June will be Armed Forces event in the Town Centre.

In the summer holidays, we are taking over half of centre square and turning it into a children's play area, it will consist of games, toys, sandpits etc. We will run regular events alongside this. The family events have been really well attended so far this year, May half term was a huge success.

Looking further ahead, we have student night on 27<sup>th</sup> September. The university are yet to plan freshers week, we usually sponsor this but as of yet they don't know what they are doing, which leaves what we do a little up in the air. Student numbers are falling in the city, and the last few student nights haven't been as

busy so we need to decide whether we still do it, or to do something smaller. There is a lot of budget thrown at the student night and we need to decide whether the money is better spent elsewhere. Last year we noted many shops didn't feel they had the best sales on student night. We found the majority of these stores had their student offer on for a full week or month, which dilutes the nights sales. MW noted that students aren't our target customer but student night is the one night we can get them in and keep them as a customer going forward. HW & DJ noted it's likely we'll do student night but on a smaller scale.

#### **Lanes Events**

One Great Day	22 <sup>nd</sup> -23 <sup>rd</sup> June
Summer Fun	23 <sup>rd</sup> July – 24 <sup>th</sup> August
Student Night	27 <sup>th</sup> September
October half term fun	22 <sup>nd</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup> October
Late Night Live event	22 <sup>nd</sup> November
Santa in The Lanes	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , 9 <sup>th</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup> , 16 <sup>th</sup> , 22 <sup>nd</sup> & 23 <sup>rd</sup> December.

#### **City Centre Events**

Armed Forces Day	23 <sup>rd</sup> June
Unity Festival	7 <sup>th</sup> July
August Market	23 <sup>rd</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> August
Fringe Festival	Dates to be confirmed
Bitts Park Fire Show	3 <sup>rd</sup> November
Remembrance Show	11 <sup>th</sup> November
Light Switch on	18 <sup>th</sup> November

#### **4. Lettings Update**

Patisserie Valerie is now open and trading well and has built up a strong following quickly. Hotel Chocolate are currently fitting out and will probably open at the end of June and Joules are also opening next door to Hotel Chocolate although that isn't one of our units. DJ attended a lettings meeting in London last week and there are an encouraging number of enquiries from new businesses. We are also going to sign up a couple of pop ups, hopefully The Christmas Shop, Hawkins Bazaar and Calendar Club. We have also had a few new names showing interest.

#### **5. Future Meetings**

We have 2 remaining meetings this year which will be held on the following dates

- 11<sup>th</sup> September 2018
- 13<sup>th</sup> November 2018

We hope to get a good attendance at these meetings so please do try your best to attend.

#### **6. Any Other Business**

MB noted The Weeping Window display at Carlisle Castle has also helped to bring footfall into the centre, especially from outside the town.

**The next retailers meeting will take place at 10am on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> September in The Management Suite.**