

APPENDIX 1

From St. George's Market traders (Friday and Saturday)
To:
Councillor Michael Browne,
(Chair of the Development Committee B.C.C)

Over the past number of months there has been an ongoing discussion around the subject of a Sunday market in St George's. We are now keen to see this discussion widened to include the Development Committee of Belfast City Council.

We sincerely hope that your committee will consider expanding the market so that Belfast might properly be considered a weekend Market City destination for all interested local visitors and tourists.

We are currently collecting signatures and comments from the general public and what seems to be a predominant theme is that many families are busy with sports and children's activities on Saturdays and work nine to five the rest of the week so rarely can avail of the St George's facility. Many have expressed an interest in coming to regular Sunday events.

So far we have collected the names of over 70 traders who would be keen to open their businesses on Sundays, on a regular basis.

Below are some of the reasons why many feel we should be a weekend market destination.

- All visitor/tourist outlets mention St George's Market in their literature yet visitors are unable to avail of the market facility on a Sunday.
- Five million people in the UK will be staying at home this summer and as Belfast is already considered one of the top weekend city destinations many will be coming here expecting a full weekend of activities rather than just two days.
- Every major European city has a market on a Sunday. (There are four in Dublin and nineteen in Berlin to name just a couple.)
- In Ireland itself, free rail travel is available for senior citizens who could take advantage of the close proximity of Central Station to St George's Market and the Victoria Centre on a Sunday outing.
- Over 280,000 visitors per annum pass through the market on a Friday and Saturday. An additional market could vastly increase these figures.

- Potential revenue could be produced up front. A Sunday market could be run at no extra cost to the Council. Currently over 75% of the Saturday traders pay a quarterly rate in advance. The Sunday will need at least six months trial to build up a following. It could also rely heavily on word of mouth from existing traders and customers.
- Being one of two Victorian Markets in original state in the British Isles, St Georges Market is mentioned in countless books and guides worldwide, many visitors who come on weekend trips would like to see it open on Sunday

We would be grateful if these points would be raised at the Development Committee level with a view to proposing the opening of St George's Market on Sundays for trade and tourism.

We would welcome the opportunity to give a presentation to the Development Committee and would be very happy to address any concerns that Committee members might have on this subject.

Meanwhile, however, we will continue to collect the numerous expressions of public and trader support for a Sunday market.

Yours Sincerely,
Belfast Branch of N.M.T.F

For any further correspondence on this subject, please contact the Branch Secretary:

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