

3 October 2017

To all SAGE Farmers Market Stall Holders

Dogs at the market

You might be aware that we recently conducted an online poll to gauge public opinion on whether companion animals should be allowed within the market precinct. The result was very close to 50/50 with a slightly higher number of votes in favour of allowing dogs.

The poll is not the deciding factor on this issue (sounds familiar) and was conducted to inform the decision making process. The number and nature of the stories and reports we have received concerning bad experiences with dogs at the market are, however, significant and cannot be disregarded. Something needs to happen.

We are unable, nor do we want, to implement an outright ban on dogs at the market. The committee has investigated our options and they are few. No Council or health regulations are being contravened, as long as there are no dogs within the stalls themselves. Yet we need to do something.

The committee feels that before we can introduce any kind of policy to control customers' dogs, we must first set the example.

We would like to know your thoughts on this approach: Firstly, introducing a rule for stall holders to exclude stall holder dogs entirely – this includes leaving a dog in a vehicle, or tying it up nearby... simply no stall holder dogs – and secondly, introducing some form of control for customers' dogs. We are still trying to determine the best way to implement a policy for this. Please let us know your thoughts and give us your ideas so we can add them to the discussion.

Reducing and Eliminating Single Use Plastic Bags

We are progressing on having our first batch of fabric produce bags ready for you to give to your customers. Stay tuned.

We have also developed a relationship with Boomerang Bags and supporters of this cause who like to sew can collect kits to make Boomerang Bags from the SAGE stall. They can bring the completed bags back to the stall to go into the Bag Bank. Of course, we are always looking for people to donate their disused fabric grocery bags to the Bag Bank as well.

The committee has decided that **the market will be single use plastic bag free from the 2018 Autumn equinox**. That gives us a little under 6 months to prepare our customers. We will be announcing this publicly when the produce bags are ready for distribution.

To help our stall holders help our customers, the committee is suggesting that we purchase bulk wet-strength paper bags and make them available to stall holders to **sell to customers for 20c each**. These will be for sale only (not to give away) and stall holders would keep the 20c/bag. We would like to receive your feedback on this suggested system. The paper bags should not simply replace plastic bags that are currently free. The customer must be charged and recognise that they have been charged. We would introduce the paper bags well before the equinox to give everyone time to get used to the new policy. **After the March equinox, no plastic grocery or produce bags will be permitted at the market.**

That's all for now.

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on behalf of the
SAGE Farmers Market Committee

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