



Wantage Town Council Charter Market POLICY – SEPT 2025

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the principles, expectations, and procedures for the operation of Wantage Town Council's charter market. The charter market is held in the market square and aims to promote economic activity, support local traders, and enhance community engagement. This policy ensures consistency, fairness, and the proper management of market activities.

2. Historical Background

Wantage has a long-standing tradition of market trading that dates back centuries. The town was granted its first official market charter in 1246, during the reign of King Henry III, establishing the legal right to hold a weekly market. This charter marked Wantage as a centre of local commerce and community life. In addition to its regular markets, the town now hosts artisan markets and a variety of events that incorporate market trading.

Historically, the market served as a hub for trade, communication, and public life. Today, Wantage Town Council continues this legacy by running a vibrant, well-managed market twice weekly in the town's historic market place, adjacent to the statue of King Alfred the Great, who was born in Wantage in 849AD.

3. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all market traders, staff, and associated stakeholders involved in the Wantage Town Council's charter market.

- Market Days: Every Wednesday and Saturday
- Market Location: Market Place, Wantage (OX12 8AB), either side of King Alfred's statue
- Market Management: Managed and administered by Wantage Town Council through appointed officers

4. Trader Eligibility and Application

4.1 Eligibility

- Open only to traders selling physical goods and products
- Service based businesses (e.g. financial services, beauty treatments, promotional stands, live demonstrations etc) are not permitted
- Preference is given to local traders and unique product offerings
- Traders must provide valid Public Liability Insurance with a minimum cover of £2 million
- Food traders must be registered with their local authority and hold a food hygiene rating of 4 or above
- Traders wishing to sell alcohol must gain prior approval from the Designated Premises Supervisor and provide a valid personal licence

4.2 Application Process

- Application forms are available from Wantage Town Council offices or website
- Applicants must submit completed forms, all relevant certificates, and await confirmation before trading
- New traders are entitled to one free trading day on their first week of attendance

5. Stall Allocation, Fees, and Letting Conditions

- Standard pitch size: 3x3 metres
- Pitch fees: £1 per square metre or as agreed by the town clerk
- Traders must provide their own gazebo/stall and be secured with weights
- Larger pitches may be allocated subject to space and approval
- VAT is not applicable, as the council only provides the pitch
- Pitches must not be sub let
- Fees are invoiced monthly in advance and must be paid within 7 days
- Continued failure to make payments or comply with conditions may result in the loss of the trader's pitch

6. Market Rules and Conduct

All traders must:

- Be fully set up by 8.00am
- Not pack up before 3.00pm, unless sold out of products, the weather is severe, or permission is granted by the market manager
- Clear the market square by 5.00pm
- Take away all waste and rubbish – public bins must not be used
- Operate only within the allocated pitch and not encroach on highways, pedestrian walk ways or around King Alfred's statue
- Keep their trading area clean, safe and professional
- Not play amplified music or cause nuisance
- Only sell physical goods - not services
- Notify the market manager by 5.00pm the evening before they are due to trade if they are unable to attend. Failure to notify will result in a 'no show' fee (full pitch fee).

7. Parking and Vehicle Management

- One support vehicle may be parked by the stall if space allows and with market manager approval. No vehicles may be moved after 8.00am
- Traders without consent to park adjacent to their stall must move vehicles to nearby pay & display car parks after unloading. Concessions are available for traders at Limborough Road car park (Vale of White Horse DC)
- Vehicles should be covered or screened where possible to maintain market appearance
- Traders must ensure public safety around their vehicles and stalls
- Traders must not encourage customers to stop or park vehicles in or near the market area to load purchases, as this poses a risk to pedestrian safety and disrupts traffic flow.

8. Cancellations and Weather Policy

- The market operates in most weather conditions
- The council reserves the right to cancel the market in cases of extreme weather or emergency
- Where cancellations occur, the council will notify traders as early as possible
- Refunds or credits may be issued at the council's discretion
- The council is not liable for loss of earnings due to cancellations

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Wantage Town Council will:

- Manage trader applications, allocations, and invoicing
- Promote the market through social media
- Ensure health and safety standards
- Maintain the market square infrastructure
- Monitor and enforce compliance with this policy and letting conditions

Market Traders will:

- Comply with this policy and the letting conditions for market traders
- Maintain up to date insurance and trading certificates
- Trade honestly, professionally, and with respect to other traders and the public
- Leave the site clean and in good condition after each market day

10. Sustainability and Climate Commitments

As part of Wantage Town Council's Climate Emergency commitments, the charter market aims to operate in an environmentally responsible way. Traders are encouraged to support these goals by:

- Minimising single-use plastics and packaging
- Using recyclable or compostable materials wherever possible
- Reducing vehicle idling and unnecessary emissions
- Taking all waste off-site and recycling where possible

The council reserves the right to update environmental requirements in line with evolving climate policy.

11. Complaints and Disputes

- Any trader or member of the public who wishes to raise a concern or complaint about any aspect of the market's operation or management should do so in writing.
- In the first instance, complaints should be directed to the market manager who will seek to resolve the issue promptly and informally where possible.
- If the matter cannot be resolved at this stage, it may be referred in writing to the town clerk,
- Where a satisfactory resolution cannot be achieved, the matter may be referred to the Leisure & Amenities Committee for consideration.

A separate document titled Letting Conditions for Market Traders provides detailed rules governing day to day trading, including:

- Pitch sizes and fees
- Payment procedures
- Setup and pack-up times
- Waste disposal
- Parking
- Insurance and food hygiene requirements
- Grounds for suspension or termination

Traders must confirm they have read and understood these conditions before trading. A copy is available:

- From Wantage Town Council offices
- By email request to: marketmanager@wantagecouncil.gov.uk
- Or on the Council website: [Terms & Conditions](#)

Document Control

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