

NABMA
the voice of markets



The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP
Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

2nd November 2020

Dear Secretary of State

The leaders of the UK's retail market industry are calling on the government to support retail markets by allowing them to remain fully open through this second national lockdown.

NABMA (National Association of British Market Authorities) and the NMTF (National Market Traders Federation) feel strongly that the closure of all "non-essential businesses" is not equitable if supermarkets are allowed to remain open and sell the non-essential products.

We are therefore calling on the government to allow all retail markets in England to remain fully open.

Markets across the UK have been at the heart of our towns, cities and communities for centuries and have a proven track record in supplying local people with food and goods. Our industry is made up of some 1,200 traditional and specialist markets and approximately 40,000 businesses trade on these markets on a regular basis. Sadly, recent surveys have suggested that due to the impact of the pandemic, as many as 80% of traditional markets now fear for their future. A further lockdown will impact on the fragility of many such local markets.

It is stressed that operators have received little, or no government support since March. Many market traders have been unable to satisfy the criteria to receive business support and have therefore sadly left the industry.

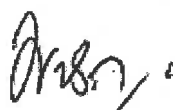
We recognise that markets and market trading are however changing and they can be the outlet for creating essential new businesses to sustain the future of the high street, and assist local economies and tourism. To fulfil this potential, they need encouragement, support and government investment and until such time then the core fabric of our industry will be undermined.

Markets have demonstrated throughout 2020 that they are a safe and reliable source of goods for local and vulnerable people. Outdoor markets were trusted by government to lead the retail industry and town centres out of lockdown in June. They are recognised as a vital asset to the vibrancy and economy of local communities, and our respective organisations believe that they should be allowed to remain open during the forthcoming national lock down, and any further national or local restrictions. This forthcoming lockdown period is the busiest and most critical time of the year for our industry in its preparation for Christmas.

We suggest that it is now time for the Government to show real support for markets and give confidence to the many small businesses that are dependent upon them.

Both NABMA and NMTF are prepared to take part in any discussions with Ministers and your officials and we look forward to your earliest response.

Yours sincerely



David Preston
Chief Executive
NABMA



Joe Harrison
Chief Executive
NMTF