

Marketing a market; recommendations for Lampeter Market

Introducing Lampeter and its market

Lampeter (Llambled in Welsh) is a town in Ceredigion, Wales. The population was 2,970 at the 2011¹ census². According to The Guardian, it is a “pretty little market town” which “is a magnet for eco-warriors, hippies and students”³.

Lampeter Market is held every 2nd and 4th Saturday, 10am to 1pm, at an outdoor town centre site. It has been going for around 10 years but has been on the present site since Covid-19 restrictions eased approximately two years ago.

It is ethical and award-winning, with great producers, quality product, and a pleasant atmosphere. By following the recommendations in this plan, it can build on this, expanding its reach to a wider demographic and new customers, including tourists and under-35s.

Analysis of the market

A field visit was carried out on 11 February 2023, consisting of general observation and some informal interviews. Due to time constraints, only one visit was made; further visits and interviews, including with customers, would have been useful.

18 stalls were counted, eight selling arts/crafts, and ten selling food or drink, including one mobile café selling hot drinks and food. Additionally, there was a music tent with live band.

Who visits?

Gary, one of the four-strong organising team, says most customers come from the surrounding (wealthier) villages, rather than Lampeter itself. Gary mentions that their free parking arrangement is coming to an end next month and that this could hit them quite hard, suggesting that many customers are indeed from out of town, and/or elderly or disabled. This was the general impression too from observing customers.

Anecdotally, it was also noticeable that this is a predominantly English-language market, with little if any Welsh heard, from traders or customers.

How is the market currently promoted?

Word of mouth is key. As Gary put it, “1,000 people might see a poster and a couple of them might come, but if I ask ten friends to come, five might. So it’s much more effective.”

¹ 2021 census town level data is not yet available, although at a county level, the population of Ceredigion has fallen since 2011 by 5.8%. See <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/W06000008/>

² Wikipedia page for Lampeter: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lampeter>

³ The Guardian, Let’s Move to Lampeter (2018): <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2018/jul/06/lets-move-to-lampeter-ceredigion-neat-town-if-like-students>

Second in their toolkit is Facebook. They create a [Facebook event](#) for each market day, in English, listing information about the producers, plus anything else of note. Traders are encouraged to co-own and share the Facebook event; six did this for the 11 February event.

Recently, they have started to put up large bilingual banners on main roads leading into Lampeter a week before market day. This appears to confirm that they are targeting out-of-town-ers. Additionally, on market day itself, there is a bilingual banner at the site entrance and a “market today” sign:



Figure 1: Signs on market day, near to the market site

A leaflet drop has been done once previously, to the town and nearby villages, but it was “expensive and time consuming”. Gary thinks the new banners are more effective and mean they probably won’t do another leaflet drop.

Is any effort being made to attract low-income residents? The Facebook event mentions a “Community Box for donations/pickups of surplus excess food and household products,

available for free to help alleviate the cost-of-living crisis and to combat food waste.” However, it wasn’t in evidence on 11 February.

Dinah, another of the organisers, revealingly says that one of their plans for the year is to get information about the market out to “all the local hotels, B&Bs and *Air BnBs*”, which suggests that one of their target segments is tourists.

Recommendations

This marketing plan aims to help the market get more out of social media, get more traction from their overall digital presence through some quick digital wins, and suggests a new run of leaflets and posters to attract more local residents. It also urges bolder messaging that celebrates what the market stands for and is already achieving; quality local produce, community cohesion and lower environmental impact.

This approach recognises that there is only so much the four-strong team can do, so efforts should be focused. One avenue for support could be to involve students from University of Wales St David’s, giving them some useful experience too.

Social media

Clearly, social media is a useful tool. However, it should never be over-relied upon, since there are many who simply do not engage with it. Furthermore, it should always be used with the aim of reaching a specific audience segment.

Facebook – for the existing audience

Facebook is good for targeting the over 35s⁴, who form a key demographic for this market, so should continue to be used.

The event page for the 11 February market was created on 6 February, which perhaps doesn’t give people enough time to get it into their diaries, or to share with friends. Ideally, they should be created at least ten days before. It is also only in English. Ideally, it should be in Welsh also, to help attract more Welsh-speakers who may be put off if they think it’s a market by and for English “incomers” only. Business Wales’ [Helo Blod](#) translation service might be helpful.

On the event page, individual traders with a Facebook presence should be @mentioned in the description, allowing people to click on each trader and learn more about them. All traders should be given help and support to successfully share the Facebook event.

If budget allows, it’s worth testing a paid promotion of the Facebook event to a geographically targeted audience of Lampeter and surrounding villages. This could be tested for about £50.

⁴ Facebook hasn’t been completely abandoned by young people, as is sometimes claimed, but older users are becoming a growing segment on the platform. See this blog for more Facebook user statistics: <https://www.socialfilms.co.uk/blog/facebook-uk-statistics>



Figure 2: Tegfan Farm, at the market for the first time, are clearly enthusiastic. They promoted their appearance at the market on Facebook, but didn't share the Facebook event. They should be given more support on social media to help share their enthusiasm with more people.

Instagram – for a younger demographic

Instagram is a visual platform and market days are inherently visual, with interesting products and people. It's also a relatively low-effort platform which can quickly achieve good reach. It has a younger demographic than Facebook, so can be used to better target under-35s, especially 25-34 yr olds, who form the biggest group on the platform⁵. The content should reflect this, and ideally be created by someone in this age group, preferably female, since 57% of Instagram users are women.

An account should be created, lots of local people, organisations and traders followed, and then bi-lingual posts scheduled in the week leading up to each event. On the day itself, an Instagram Story could be used to announce that the market is open and to showcase the stalls.

Adding further social media platforms won't be helpful at this point; it is better to do one or two platforms well than three or four badly.

⁵ See <https://www.socialfilms.co.uk/blog/instagram-uk-statistics> for more on Instagram's UK demographic

Hashtags

Promoting a hashtag is easy to do and will be beneficial, especially if customers can be encouraged to use it and effectively becoming brand ambassadors.

Tegfan farm use **#marchnadllambed_lampetermarket** on their Facebook posts. However, this is too long for a single hashtag. Using both **#marchnadllambed** and **#lampetermarket** is recommended, giving people the choice. Additionally, it will be useful to use hashtags like **#buylocal** **#supportlocal** **#midWales** **#Ceredigion** and **#marketday**.

Signs could be made, saying “Why not share your **#marchnadllambed** **#lampetermarket** purchases on social media?”



Figure 3: Selfie boards similar to this one could be created to encourage people to take a branded photo.

Source: <https://www.bannerbuzz.co.uk/custom-selfie-frames/p>

Since there is still some confusion about the name (Lampeter Farmers’ Market and Lampeter People’s Market still appear online) an exercise should be done to update or delete any listings or references to old names, to avoid brand confusion. Promoting the **#marchnadllambed** and **#lampetermarket** hashtags will also help reinforce the correct name.

Digital marketing – for people searching online

Three quick wins are recommended to help people, including tourists, searching online for markets in Lampeter:

Firstly, the organisers should claim their Google Business listing. At present, a search for Lampeter Market on Google Maps brings up a listing for [Lampeter Farmers Market](#), which should be claimed and updated. Opening hours should be added, as well as links to a

website. It would also be useful to encourage people to add a review highlighting positive attributes, such as the friendly atmosphere.

Secondly, the top web search result for Lampeter Market is [this page on the town council website](#). Whilst having a dedicated website would be helpful it is not essential, so long as this web content can be updated, with the correct name, photos, map and link to the enhanced Google Maps listing.

Thirdly, if there is a desire to attract more tourists, then a listing on TripAdvisor is a must (and can be [done here](#)). This alone could help bring in a considerable number of tourists.

Leaflets – for local people

Since the last leaflet drop was done several years ago, before Covid and the change in location, there may be local people who are unaware the market still takes place. While the roadside banners may promote to a geographic segment of out-of-town folk, the local segment, who perhaps don't drive as much, could be more easily reached with a two-sided bilingual A5 maildrop leaflet.

A4 copies could also be displayed on community noticeboards and in local shop windows. Any retailers worried about a negative impact on their business can be reassured that markets actually bring in more customers and money to an area on market day and everyone benefits.⁶

During the busier summer months on market day, it could be worth paying someone to wear a 'sandwich board' and hand out the leaflets on the nearby high street to bring in any 'passing trade', including tourists, not reached by other methods.

Messaging – adapt for different audiences

More could be made of the sustainability ethos, which could also help promote the market to a psychographic segment of *people who care* about the environment, locally and globally.

Gary explains that "If you spend a tenner in Sainsburys, £8 of it goes out to the shareholders. Spend a tenner here and it will stay here." Yet Gary also says these are things they don't want to "preach" about, perhaps fearing they might sound too radical. Yet preach, or at least shout, they should! Pickled222 is so called because the jams and pickles are produced just 222 yards away, and are brought to market by handcart, with zero fossil fuel emissions. Elmo's Kitchen prints food miles information on *all* its products (Figure 4). Sustainability is fundamental to this market and should be celebrated.

⁶ A 2005 study by Taylor *et al.* from the New Economics Foundation (NEF) researched two farmers' markets in London and found an uplift in spending in the local area on market day. Download the report at <https://neweconomics.org/2005/11/trading-places>



Figure 4: Every product on Elmo's Kitchen stall has a food-miles label showing how far it has travelled. In summer, around 60% of produce is from the mid-Wales area.

In 2021, the market won the [UK Slow Food Best Market in Wales Award](#). The awards are about promoting the values of 'slow food' (ethical, healthy, tasty, sustainable), and supporting local economies through local food and craft production. It should be mentioned in all marketing materials and the 'biog' sections of social media profiles. Simply using the phrase "award winning market" could help promote confidence and attract people motivated by ideas around quality and might play particularly well in marketing to tourists.

It should also be made more obvious that the market is a social, rather than profit-making enterprise. Successful social enterprises, such as Belu Water, remind their customers at every opportunity that by buying the product they are making the world a better place⁷. If anything, the message here is even stronger – by shopping at Lampeter Market, you are making *Lampeter* a better place; more resilient, more vibrant.

There is also an argument that the market could do more around social justice and inequality. One option to consider is the *pay it forward* approach, whereby (wealthier) customers are given the option to add £1, say, onto their purchase to help buy fruit and vegetables for someone who is less able to afford them. This would see the market take on a 'give back' approach to social enterprise. It is worth considering, as both a socially just 'right thing to do' as well as something else to highlight in marketing materials to show that the market is doing what it can to help people who are struggling. This messaging could be especially appealing to local people.

⁷ See for example the Belu Water homepage: www.beluwater.co.uk



Figure 5: There's plenty of space to relax and catch up with friends over a coffee, with live music in the background.

Lampeter Market already tells a good story about being ethical, offering quality local produce, and being a regular social event (Figure 5). It could tell a *great* story by being less shy about being a social enterprise and supporting local people and the local economy. These are *all* things to be proud of and represent clear differentiation from the supermarkets.

Measuring success

Ultimately, success will look like more people visiting the market (measured by periodic footfall counts), more people spending money at the stalls (measured by asking stallholders for feedback), and more stallholders. There will also be more, and more recent, content about the market online, especially on social media, which will in-turn help generate more real-world visits.

To further measure success and refine the marketing plan, interviews or surveys with customers (ideally carried out every 6 months) could explore in more detail where they have come from, how they heard about the market, what motivated them to visit, what they think of it, and what they bought. This research could be carried out by local students.

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