

Street Markets

Read the following text. Answer the questions that follow by choosing the best alternative – A, B, C or D. Base your answers on the information in the texts.

The autumn wasps are lounging around Mr Foster's bunches of grapes and piles of lychee plums as he says, "I wouldn't like any of my children to go into this line of business." He is 62 and has a fruit and vegetables stall at one end of the market. His brother is helping out at the flower stall at the other end. Their family has been busy at Tachbrook Street, five minutes from Victoria Station in London, ever since a market was set up there in the middle of the 19th century. "They treat us like second-class citizens," he says, referring to Westminster Council. "You're immediately in the wrong."

This is a common complaint among the market men and women. Market barrows left in the street overnight have been put onto low-loaders and taken away, and the council demands £200 for their return. Apparently they are a fire-risk, or something, although the street is a cul-de-sac. Health and Safety officers have been inspecting stalls. "If you're one inch over the size of your pitch, you get a letter from the council saying your licence will be revoked," says another trader. It is a picture of persecution from the market-folks' point of view.

It is all very puzzling. Fruit and veg and meat and fish are often cheaper and better in the market than in the supermarket. Why should the council be so unhelpful? Surely everyone prefers a colourful market to an empty, dead-end street.

Yes, there does seem to be an ideological prejudice against Tachbrook Street and the other markets, such as Berwick Street in Soho, where stalls are now permitted only along one side of the road. "Political motivations come into it a lot," said one source at Westminster Council. "Basically there are too many already. They cause a nuisance. There is a firm policy of not granting new pitches, and the council now has the power to reduce the number of them."

This seems to be true. There are six designated street markets in Westminster, and, in a helpful hand-out for hopeful traders, the council says that it is "now pursuing a policy which prevents any growth in the present number of licensed street trading pitches". What this seems to mean is that if you trade without a licence you will be prosecuted; if you apply for a licence, you will be refused.

There never was a golden era of street trade. Why, for example, did the picturesque flower girls of Piccadilly and the City die out? Lack of interest? Not at all. In 1930, when the Corporation of the City of London exercised a policy to grant no new licences for five years, Mary Anne was said to be the last flower girl in the City. At the time the demand for flowers was growing. Two years later Miss Lydia Jordan, another old flower girl, was fined half a crown for obstruction (a favourite charge) outside the Stock Exchange.

1 How long has John Foster's family been street traders?

- A About 25 years
- B About 50 years
- C About 150 years
- D About 200 years

2 How is the policy of Westminster Council described?

- A It is very helpful
- B It creates problems for traders
- C It makes people feel secure
- D It is generous with licences

3 What is said about the advantage of street markets?

- A They have high standards of hygiene
- B They are within easy reach
- C They attract lots of tourists
- D They have low prices

4 What does the Council regard as a problem with street markets?

- A They cause irritation
- B They are open on Sundays
- C They cost too much
- D They might be unhealthy

5 What was Miss Lydia Jordan accused of?

- A She hindered traffic
- B Her shouting disturbed neighbours
- C She was overcharging
- D She had no valid permit

The Fosters are a respectable Catholic family. The clergy from Westminster Cathedral shop here, as does *The Spectator* cook, Jennifer Paterson, and *Country Life* editor, Clive Aslet. The talk in Victoria is of the elderly, who come along for their chat each day. “Go to a supermarket and there are no friendly faces, and no one to ask about the produce. They have young kids stacking the shelves who don’t know an avocado pear from a conference pear.” That is what Fred Ray, secretary of the market committee, thinks.

But Fred, like Bryn and his wife at the greetings card stall on the other side of the street, are glum about the market’s future. Among the reasons the market traders give are: Sunday trading, lack of parking for customers and deliveries, rain, shopping malls and plastic. Go to Tesco’s and you can pay with a card—“and then you can ask for £20 or £30

cash at the checkout”. What else? “Shoppers haven’t got much time, they like to find everything under one roof.”

All this is true. There is also the problem of the barrows. The council says they have to stow them away at night. That might be no trouble in Church Street or Chapel Street, but in upwardly-mobile Victoria it has become a headache. “I can see if you’ve paid money for a nice mews house you don’t want barrows rumbling out early in the morning,” says John Foster, philosophically. “There’s a car park here owned by the council where we could put barrows at night, but they lock it up,” says another stallholder. “The council’s just a pain in the backside.”

Now Sainsbury’s wants to build a big supermarket on the site of the old bus garage around the corner. “I think we’ll fizzle out,” says a dejected Mr Foster. Perhaps they will.

6 What does Fred Ray say about supermarkets?

- A Strangely enough many people prefer them
- B The atmosphere is stressful
- C The staff is often young and inexperienced
- D It’s difficult to find what you want

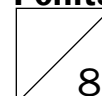
7 What is implied about house owners?

- A They want their street to be quiet
- B They don’t mind the street traders
- C They think street shopping is a great service
- D They are strongly against the car park

8 What does John Foster think about the future?

- A He is looking forward to quitting
- B His trade will disappear
- C He is going to start a new stall
- D He plans for a new range of goods

Points



Bedömningsanvisning

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8 poäng

1	2	3	4	5
C	B	D	A	A

6	7	8
C	A	B