

a) KALM Survey I

In April 2009 301 farmers (all Abergavenny Market Users) signed a KALM petition to retain the Abergavenny Acts which secure the present livestock market site. This evidence of actual farmer names and addresses was presented on 13th May 2009 to Mike German, then S.E. Wales Regional AM, who received them on behalf of our Monmouthshire constituency AM Nick Ramsay, who was unable to see us on the morning. You will already be aware of this and the petition documents are already with you.

b) KALM Survey II

Following a series of four farmer discussion meetings hosted by KALM in the rural areas surrounding Abergavenny in October 2009, the voting was 203 to 16 to keep the Abergavenny Livestock Market - that's 92.7% of actual farmers in support of retention of the current market. These figures comprise those farmers who attended the meetings plus those unable to attend the meetings but who wished to participate in the vote. The voting forms have the names and addresses of the farmer - real, verifiable evidence in the possession of KALM.

These results are publicly available on the KALM website: www.keepkalm.co.uk and are attached separately as Appendix A

c) MCC's lack of credible evidence

MCC, as owners of the Abergavenny Livestock Market site, have failed to conduct any surveys or publish any evidence to back their claim that farmers who use Abergavenny livestock market support its sale. These claims of farmer support for the proposed new market at Bryngwyn appear to be based on two claims:

(i) discussions with leaders of the two farming unions, i.e. discussions with approximately two people.

(ii) the vote at a meeting organised by the NFU at Alice Springs golf club in 2009 where a verbal motion was put asking if those present wanted a market which they would have to pay for or a market which MCC would pay for. The show-of-hands vote indicated about 100 in favour of the MCC-funded market and about 5 not in favour. A predictable outcome to a very biased motion. The meeting was poorly advertised in the Abergavenny area and an Abergavenny farmer and long-time market user who was present, and who knows most of the local market users, said he recognised hardly anybody there. It was clear that most of those present were from the South of Monmouthshire and not regular Abergavenny market users, The voting was anonymous, and non-verifiable.

This contrasts with KALM's verifiable recorded voting described in paras a) and b) above. It was clear in the KALM meetings (para b above) that farming union representatives did not represent the opinions of the great majority of local market users and the recorded voting speaks for itself - 92.7% in favour of retaining the present market.

d) MCC's admission of no written consultation

In response to a Freedom of Information Request submitted by lawyers acting for KALM in December 2010, MCC replied on 9th February 2011 as follows to one of the requests:

“Consultation Documents (farming community) - informal meetings and conversations took place, but there was no formal written consultation or response, so the Council holds no such documentation.”

This admission by MCC proves beyond doubt that local market users have NOT been properly consulted by MCC, and KALM’s evidence in a) and b) above proves that the local market users’ wishes are overwhelmingly against closing the market.

MCC claims of “extensive consultation” with the farming community would appear to be false, casting doubt on Mr. Greenslade’s statement quoted above and on the processes which underpin it.

We request that this information and evidence be placed before the Minister at the appropriate time.

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On behalf of KALM

Barry Greenwood
On behalf of KALM