

“The Market makes a vital contribution to the social fabric of the area as a meeting place, for networking for traders and the local community and information exchange. It has a buzz and acts as a hub for community interaction and engagement”

Mike Payne, LA coach



an opportunity for enterprise

Sneinton's open air market has been trading on its current site at the heart of the east side of Nottingham for over a hundred years. It is a general market serving the local community with an accessible, diverse and affordable range of products and services. Stalls on the market feature a wide range of products ranging from fresh fruit and vegetables to clothes, shoes and cards.

The stalls are proving an ideal 'low cost and low risk' way of stimulating local small businesses and entrepreneurialism while offering much needed training and employment opportunities in the surrounding area. Flexible business premises in the Lace Market/Hockley areas of the city provide an ideal outlet for small businesses, particularly in the creative industries, making this area a hub of entrepreneurial activity.

In recent years, the market has been declining and faced closure. For Mike, who has traded at the market for over thirty years, the potential closure was a catalyst for action to reinvigorate the market. Mike and other traders linked up with the Local Alchemy project, and are working with Mike Payne, the Local Alchemy coach, to introduce a range of improvements to the market.

The market has now been relaunched with a new social enterprise established in 2006 to manage the market, bringing a focus on marketing and promotion and attracting more visitors, whilst physical improvements to the market have improved the customer and business environment. As a result, the number of stalls has increased by more than forty per cent this year.

New stalls include a clothing manufacturer and Maignredient, whose catering training and advisory business received a start up grant from the Alchemist Fund in April 2006 and has recently expanded into trading at the market, serving up tasty crepes for visitors and providing 'hands-on' food retail training. This has provided a stepping-stone for local residents into enterprise.

The recent **nef** report, *The World on a Plate* about London's Queens Market highlighted the range of tangible regeneration benefits that street markets deliver. Traders at Sneinton Market read the report, and talk enthusiastically about developing accredited retail training that will draw on the entrepreneurial skills and knowledge of market traders and give new and existing stallholders practical experience of running a business.

Market traders are taking practical steps to make the market as sustainable as possible by sorting cardboard for recycling while animals at the local farm and at the donkey sanctuary feed on fruit and vegetables left over at the end of the market day.

The next challenge is in involving traders and the local community in the regeneration plans for the Upper Eastside of Nottingham. These plans could provide an ideal opportunity to build on this vital local asset and maximise its social, economic and environmental impacts for the local economy and community.