

NEWS RELEASE

11th November 2009

Is This Bedfordshire's Best Job?

Luton's indoor market has announced it's looking for a candidate to resurrect the ancient (and coveted) role of Ale Taster in the town, a position that disappeared in the early nineteenth century.

In medieval times, ordinary citizens were appointed to oversee and inspect various aspects of everyday life, effectively doing the work of our modern Inspectors of Weights and Measures. Not surprisingly, one of the most popular offices to be held was that of the Ale Taster. His duties involved visiting stalls and inns on market days and during the town's fairs to ensure that the ales, beers and other produce on sale were of good quality.

"There's been a market in the town for many hundreds of years, so the Ale Taster would have been a familiar sight right up to the late nineteenth century when the position will have been phased out." explains Malcolm Ball, chief executive of Town and Country Markets, the organisation responsible for the revival.

He added that he felt that the ancient office would still hold its value even centuries on. "Although the attraction of such a role may seem obvious at first, the 21st Century version would incorporate many more responsibilities than the original. Our Ceremonial Ale Taster would become an ambassador for the promotion of food and drink in the town. Modern tastes have evolved and become so much more sophisticated in recent times and people demand ever greater levels of quality and variety."

"We fully expect this to be reflected in the calibre of applicants.

"The successful candidate will have a sound knowledge and genuine love of food and drink, local expertise in these areas being particularly attractive. He/she must be passionate and vocal about the subject, actively wanting to promote all the town has to offer in a multitude of ways.

"It must be stated that although the role is voluntary, it obviously carries benefits!"

Interested applicants can find out more details at the website

www.lutonaletaster.co.uk

The submitted entries will be considered by a panel of judges and four lucky short-listed applicants will be notified and invited to an event that will be held in the market in the new year, at which a winning candidate will be chosen after completing a number of challenges that will demonstrate their knowledge and abilities.

ENDS

Notes for News Desk:

(1) Applicants need to submit a short written application – of no more than one A4 page (via email or hard copy) explaining why they would be the best person for the ceremonial role.

Email: info@lutonaletaster.co.uk

Postal Address:

Luton Ale Taster
Town and Country Markets Ltd
21 Market Street
Wellington
TF1 1DT

(2) Entry Criteria

The applicants must live in the town or one of the surrounding villages and would need to meet the following criteria:

- Be over the age of 18
- Have a good knowledge of food and drink – ideally with a local angle...
- Be passionate about the subject
- Be an articulate speaker
- Be comfortable with speaking to the media and in front of audiences.
- Have a smart appearance – in terms of dress, grooming etc.

(3) Judging Panel

The judging panel will be appointed shortly and the details will be posted on the website.

(4) Timescales

It is planned that the following timescales will be used, although the organisers do reserve the right to make changes as required.

Closing Date for Entries – Entries must be received by midnight on 18th December 2009. Entries after that time will not be considered.

Judging The shortlisting of the candidates will take place during January 2010.

Investiture – The final selection and investiture for the new Ceremonial Ale Taster will take place at an event in the market, details of which will be announced during January 2010. All four short-listed candidates will receive a selection of prizes.

(5) Town and Country Markets is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Wellington Market Company Plc, a company whose history can be traced back to its beginnings in 1244 when it was established by a Royal Charter. The company operates 19 markets throughout the UK and in the year ending 31st December 2008, turned over approximately £7m with around 80 employees.

Website: www.TCmarkets.co.uk

Further Press Information

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