

# CONTACTLESS IN TEWKESBURY

A mini scenario / workshop for the Ars Magica roleplaying game by Andrew Oakley [aoakley.com](http://aoakley.com) 17 July 2022

It is Monday 7 February 2022. Tewkesbury Medieval Festival, the largest medieval re-enactment fayre in Europe, is finally confirmed to be back on for 9-10 July 2022, after a two-year Covid pandemic hiatus.

You are not a re-enactor. **You are a real magi.**

You are a member of the Covenant of Reenactor Enactors. You are hundreds of years old. You are a medieval magi who lives in the modern day. You make a living selling realistic medieval items to reenactors.

During the Coronavirus pandemic, the UK switched away from cash to contactless payments. This includes the merchants at Tewkesbury Medieval Festival now the pandemic is (hopefully) coming to an end.

**On Saturday 9 July 2022 you must be able to accept contactless payments.**

The rules, as set out by the Covenant of Reenactor Enactors:

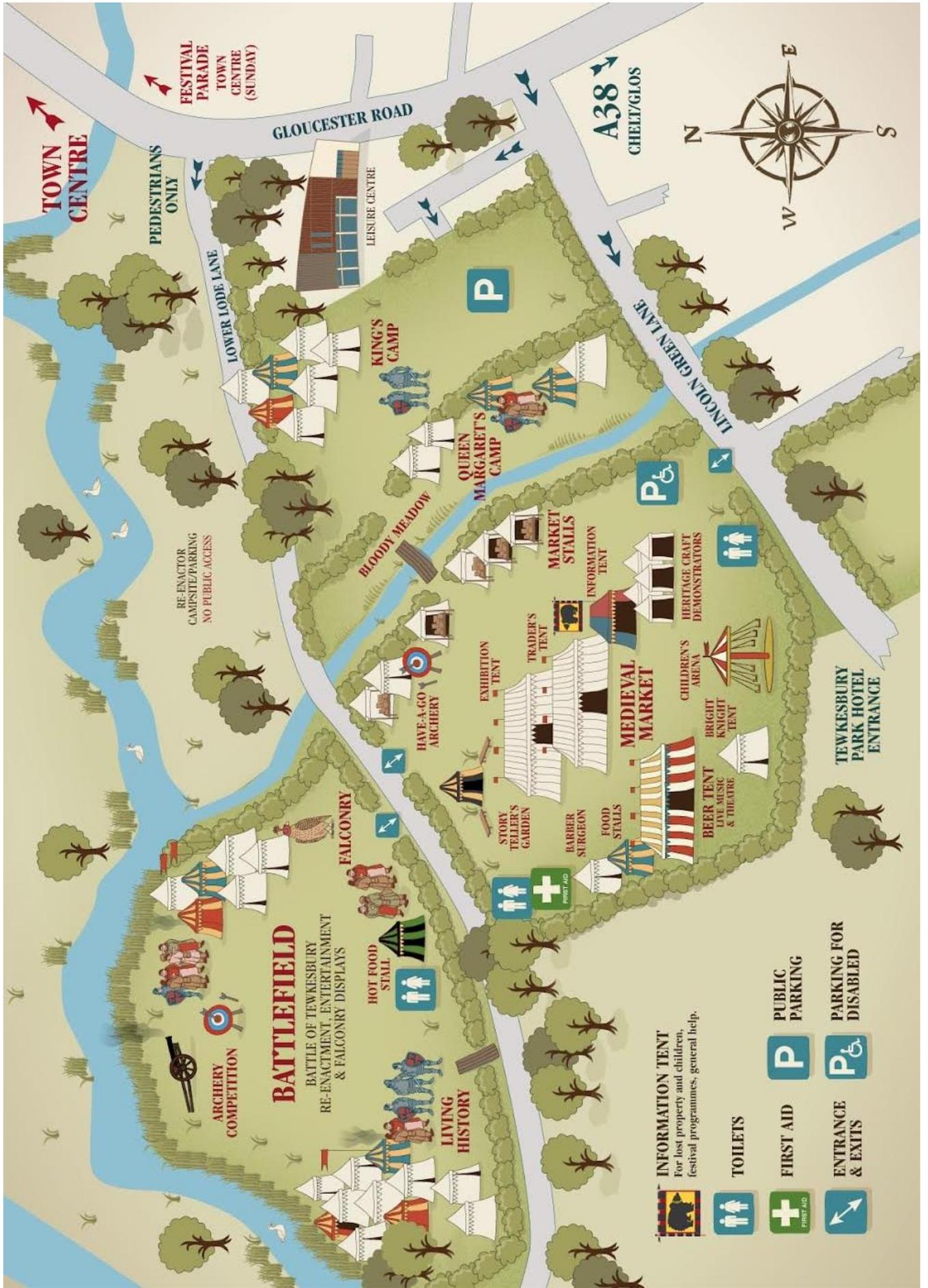
- **You cannot use modern technology.** The festival celebrates the Battle of Tewkesbury in 1471. **You may not use any technology beyond that day, 4 May 1471.**
- You cannot get out of the challenge, including but not limited to putting up a sign saying "cash only" or borrowing/stealing a neighbouring merchant's contactless payment device.
- You may use any magical method at your disposal; cast spells, enchant items, make deals with faeries, devils, use non-hermetic magic etc.
- You can also do mundane things, so long as they are in the spirit of medieval times. For example, send your companion to rob a bank vault, or get your grog scribe to falsify paperwork. But you can't do modern things such as hacking bank computers.
- You can reasonably have been expecting to need to accept contactless payments for around two years (i.e. from July 2020, when it became apparent that the pandemic was not going to be over quickly), so you can have done plenty of preparation.
- Your solution must result in money being deducted from the customer, without the customer handing over anything except their bank card. The bank card must be given back within 30 seconds. The customer expects their bank card to be undamaged.

**Optional** extra hard rules, in addition to the basic rules:

- Your solution must result in you gaining money.
- The customer must not lose sight of their bank card during the transaction, and wants to keep hold of it.
- The customer will check their bank account in a fortnight and will expect to see the item on their statement.

Things to think about:

- What is money? Gold? Silver? Coins? Notes? A number in a written ledger? A number in a computer?
- You have grogs and companions, and you can form deals with other creatures from the Ars Magica world. You can't get out of having to take contactless payments on the day in person, but you can have others - both magical and mundane - working behind the scenes for you, both on the day, and beforehand.
- Are you cooperating with the other magi at the festival, or going it alone? Are you integrating contactless payments into a wider magical/medieval banking conspiracy?
- It's normal for reenactors to hide modern things by dressing them up as medieval things. A customer wouldn't flinch at the stallholder having a leather money bag or drinking from a waterskin. How oldie-worldy can your contactless contraption be without raising suspicion from the modern mundane customer?
- The festival takes place on the battlefield of the Battle of Tewkesbury. One large field has a battle re-enactment (high aura), a neighbouring field (which was also part of the real battle) has an area reserved for authentic medieval stalls (high aura); your stall is there. There are also other nearby areas with modern stalls and the like, such as ice-cream vans, fairground rides, first aid station and so forth (medium to low aura).



**TOWN CENTRE**

PEDESTRIANS ONLY

FESTIVAL PARADE  
TOWN CENTRE  
(SUNDAY)

GLoucester ROAD

A38  
CHELT/GLOS



LOWER LODGE LANE

LEISURE CENTRE

P

KING'S CAMP

QUEEN MARGARET'S CAMP

LINCOLN GREEN LANE

RE-ENACTOR  
CAMPSITE/PARKING  
NO PUBLIC ACCESS

BLOODY MEADOW

MARKET STALLS

P &

EXHIBITION TENT

TRADER'S TENT

INFORMATION TENT

HERITAGE CRAFT DEMONSTRATORS

TOILETS

HAVE-A-GO ARCHERY

FALCONRY

STORY TELLER'S GARDEN

BARBER SURGEON

FOOD STALLS

MEDIEVAL MARKET

CHILDREN'S ARENA

BRIGHT KNIGHT TENT

BEER TENT  
LIVE MUSIC & THEATRE

Tewkesbury PARK HOTEL  
ENTRANCE

ARCHERY COMPETITION

**BATTLEFIELD**

BATTLE OF TEWKESBURY  
RE-ENACTMENT, ENTERTAINMENT  
& FALCONRY DISPLAYS

HOT FOOD STALL

LIVING HISTORY

INFORMATION TENT  
For lost property and children,  
festival programmes, general help.

TOILETS

FIRST AID

ENTRANCE & EXITS

PUBLIC PARKING

PARKING FOR DISABLED

