

**CORN EXCHANGE WORKING PARTY MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 7 December 2020

At 5.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	L Ashbourne J Aitman	L Duncan J King
Officers:	Adam Clapton Tomas Smith	Office Manager Venue Manager
Others:	no members of the public.	

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

3 MINUTES

The Working Party received and considered the minute of the meeting held on 7 September 2020.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Corn Exchange Working Party held on 7 September 2020 are an accurate account and should be signed by the Chair.

4 CORN EXCHANGE WORKING PARTY TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Office Manager reported that the Town Council had been awarded £32, 591.35 towards the Corn Exchange from the District Council Community Facilities Grant. This needed to be spent within 12 months.

Members discussed the terms of reference and agreed that these should stay the same.

RECOMMENDED: that the terms of reference remain the same.

5 **REQUEST TO RUN A CINEMA IN THE CORN EXCHANGE**

The Working Party received and considered the report of the Venue Manager concerning an offer of “technical support” to run a cinema in the Corn Exchange by the person who had formerly done so before the refurbishment. He had suggested a 50/50 split on profits although the Venue Manager had worked out that at the suggested ticket cost of £5.00 per person there would not be any profit, taking into account the restriction on numbers due to Covid-19. With an increased ticket price and bar takings there might be a small profit. Members were also asked to consider how long it might run for, if agreed.

Members discussed the Council’s previous experience of the Town Council facilitating a cinema and how long the project might run for. The Office Manager reminded members that the request was to run until March when the town’s cinema was due to re-open.

The Venue Manager reassured members that he would be stringent in implementing health and safety requirements.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted and:-

1. that Mr Richards be permitted to run a cinema once per fortnight from January until March on agreed terms but that the Council reserves the right to give a two-week notice to terminate at any time;
2. that the pricing structure for tickets be delegated to the Venue Manager.

6 **1863 CAFE BAR OPERATION**

The Working Party received the report of the Venue Manager, who gave an additional update on the current operation of the 1863 bar. He was now recommending that with the staff working out of the reception area, the café could open with seating. The Compliance and Environment Officer had confirmed that this would be appropriate with restricted numbers and tables spread out.

RECOMMENDED: that the 1863 café bar opens 5 days a week (Tuesday – Saturday, with inside Seating available and all required Covid -safe elements put in place – this arrangement will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Working Party in January and would be subject to Government Guidance on Covid-19.

7 **CORN EXCHANGE PHASE TWO REFURBISHMENT UPDATE**

The Working Party received and considered a report from the Venue Manager. He had not been able to get in touch with the consultants at all which was disappointing but was aware that things needed to get moving quickly as the Council was now in receipt of time limited grant funding. Members were very concerned by this and felt that the Town Clerk should write to the consultants.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted and: -

1. that the Town Clerk to writes to Oxford Arts Consultants asking for a response from them by 4th January and if no communication was forthcoming, the Working Party be prepared to find alternative consultants;

2. that a door be installed just to the left of the noticeboard and the existing door into the hall from the kitchen be blocked up – the new door would be entrance only to avoid possible clashes with the main hall door;
3. that the provision and purchase of some protective vinyl flooring for the area behind the bar be delegated to the Venue Manager.

The meeting closed at: 5.42 pm

Chair