

**HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 8 November 2021

At 6.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor M Jones (Chair)

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| Councillors: | V Gwatkin | L Duncan |
| | J Aitman | R Smith |
| | T Ashby | |
| Officers: | Adam Clapton | Deputy Town Clerk |
| | Sharon Groth | Town Clerk |
| | Simon Wright | Democratic & Legal Services Officer |
| Others: | 1 member of the public. Councillor Harry Eaglestone | |

H556 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Ashbourne & O Collins

H557 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

H558 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 13 September 2021 were received.

There were no matters arising.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

H559 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned for this item.

Mr Barry Jessel representing Witney Allotment Association addressed the committee in respect of Agenda Item No. 8 – Request for Gates at Hailey Road Allotments.

The Committee reconvened following public participation

At the request of the Chair the committee agreed to consider Agenda Items 7 & 8 before Agenda Item No. 5

H560 **LAKESIDE ALLOTMENTS - TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY**

Consideration was given to the report of the Project Officer regarding the results of a topographical survey around the Lakeside allotments to determine the extent of a bund required to prevent flooding to the allotments.

The committee noted the potential costs outlined in the confidential appendix to the report and that this was prohibitive. Discussion ensued regarding the site location, possible remedial works and the potential impact of development near the allotments.

Resolved:

That, Officers be requested to look at options for remedial works that may be possible to alleviate flooding issues.

H561 **WITNEY ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION - REQUEST FOR GATES AT HAILEY ROAD ALLOTMENTS**

The report of Operations & Estates Advisor regarding vehicular and pedestrian access at Hailey Road allotments was received.

The committee considered options for replacement gates, site security, the layout of the site and land ownership issues. It was noted that there had been incidents of trespass on the site and that reporting to Thames Valley Police on 101 was appropriate as it informed policing priorities.

Discussion ensued regarding management of the allotment sites and it was suggested and agreed that six monthly inspections be undertaken by the council as landowner.

Resolved:

1. That, discussion of options for improving security of the site be undertaken between officers and Witney Allotment Association; and
2. That, regular six-month inspections of the allotment sites be instigated.

Councillor Eaglestone left the meeting at this juncture.

H562 **BURIAL TIMES**

The report of the Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer was received outlining proposed new burial times during the winter months and health and safety. The Deputy Town Clerk clarified that the proposed timings and amendments to those stated in the report.

Resolved:

That, the inclusion of the below burial times in the new cemetery Terms & Conditions be approved:

November to March:

11:00-14:00

April to October:

Tower Hill: Monday – Thursday 10:00-15:00, Friday 10:00-14:00

Windrush: Monday – Thursday 11:00-15:00, Friday 11:00-14:00

H563 **TOWER HILL CEMETERY - DDI AUDIT ACCESS REQUIREMENTS**

Consideration was given to the report of the Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer regarding progress with the DDI Audit Access at Tower Hill Cemetery.

The development of a site plan to be provided on site and for inclusion in the new cemeteries brochure was supported. It was further noted that works to make the parking area more usable had been undertaken.

In respect of a budget bid, it was suggested that the Town Clerk in conjunction with other officers look at this as part of the process.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted; and
2. That, the Town Clerk in conjunction with other officers considers the budget implications as part of the budget setting.

H564 **PUBLIC HALLS & 1863 CAFÉ BAR REPORT**

Consideration was given to the report of the Venue & Events Officer providing an update on activities and bookings at Council owned venues.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

H565 **BUDGET**

The Town Clerk advised that it had not been possible to finalise the budget papers as the recharges had yet to be included. In addition consideration of options for the Café bar at the Corn Exchange would also need consideration to inform the budget.

The Committee considered the draft figures and noted the present position.

Resolved

1. That, the report be noted; and
2. That, the revised base revenue budget for 2021/22 and estimated base revenue budgets for 2022/23 be approved.

H566 **SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED FEES & CHARGES 2022/23**

The Committee considered a schedule of proposed fees & charges for 2022/23.

It was advised that the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee had agreed that the fees and charges of the Town Council for 2022/23 should rise in line with inflation which equated, when rounded down, to a 3% rise.

Resolved:

That, the following Fees & Charges be approved:

- i. Burials Fees & Charges
- ii. Public Halls Fees & Charges

H567 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:

That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted.

H568 **1863 CAFE - BUSINESS PLAN**

The Committee considered the confidential report of the Venue & Events Officer outlining options for the development of the 1863 Café bar at the Corn Exchange.

Members discussed the role of the café bar, likely demand once the Corn Exchange refurbishment was finished, competition issues and the financial and staffing implications.

After discussion it was agreed that the Corn Exchange Working Party would be the best forum for considering the options.

Resolved:

That, the matter be referred to the Corn Exchange Working Party for consideration.

The meeting closed at: 6.55 pm

Chair