

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

Held on Monday, 7 November 2022

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

Present:

Councillor M Jones (Chair)

Councillors:	D Enright T Ashby O Collins	L Duncan P Hiles R Smith (In place of V Gwatkin)
Officers:	Adam Clapton Sharon Groth Derek Mackenzie	Deputy Town Clerk Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	1 members of the public.	

H554 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Butterfield and V Gwatkin.

H555 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

H556 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 26 September 2022 were received.

Councillor R Smith confirmed that she was in attendance at the meeting.

Resolved:

1. That, the minutes be updated to show attendance of Councillor Smith and,
2. That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments committee held 26 September 2022 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair

H557 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The committee heard from a representative of the Phoenix Project concerning Agenda Item 7.

The Committee reconvened

H558 **PUBLIC HALLS REPORT**

The committee received and considered the report of the Venue & Events Officer.

Members were encouraged to hear plans for an events programme and Eventbrite ticketing which would enhance the venue. They also discussed the Gallery Room flooring and were unanimously in favour of replacing the carpet. The specific carpet, along with potential redecoration of the room was referred to the Corn Exchange Working Party.

The Committee also received the public halls usage report and queries the letting hours and inclusion of the meeting room at Burwell Hall.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, choice of replacement carpet and potential redecoration be delegated to the Corn Exchange Working Party (CEWP) and,
3. That, officers review the usage figures for both halls.

H559 **PUBLIC HALLS - REVIEW OF BOOKING TERMS & CONDITIONS**

The committee received a verbal report from the Deputy Town Clerk.

The revised booking form contained the updated conditions and information to improve the clarity of the Public Halls booking procedure and included changes on details on parking and payment terms. Also, a Hall Hire Feedback form was added so that the council could improve the public hall services.

Members discussed the amendments and requested that the form was easy to find on the Council's website and asked if it could be completed online as well as being able to be printed and completed by hand.

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that once the new seating is installed and the fire survey carried out, the maximum attendance figures would be updated in the document.

Resolved:

1. That, the verbal report be noted and,
2. That, the maximum attendance figures are updated as soon as available and,
3. That, the council proceed with the introduction of the new booking form.

H560 **CORN EXCHANGE - ARTS SUBSIDISED HIRE REQUEST**

The Committee received correspondence from the West Oxfordshire District Council Safer Communities Officer regarding an exhibition by the Phoenix Project.

Members considered the request for a subsidised hire of the Corn Exchange to host an exhibition to support the "16 days of Activism" between 25 November and 10 December. The

committee voted, and the decision was unanimous to allow the free use of the Corn Exchange to highlight this important issue and also the community window of the Administration office.

Resolved:

1. That, the correspondence be noted and,
2. That, the subsidised hire request to facilitate the Phoenix Project be recommended and;
3. That, the Venue & Events Officer contact the exhibition organiser to confirm arrangements.

H561 **CORN EXCHANGE - VIGIL REQUEST 20TH NOVEMBER**

The committee received a verbal report from the Deputy Town Clerk regarding a request for a vigil to be held in the curtilage outside the Corn Exchange on 20 November to highlight the transgender day of remembrance.

Members were happy to agree to the proposal providing further information was provided to officers if it was to go ahead.

Resolved:

1. That, the verbal report be noted and,
2. That, agreement be given for a vigil to mark Transgender Day of Remembrance on 20 November 2022 outside the Corn Exchange and,
3. That, it be delegated to the officers to make necessary arrangements for the vigil.

H562 **CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN**

The committee received and considered the report of the Project Officer and a verbal update from the Deputy Town Clerk.

Members thanked the Project Officer for the clear explanation of the proposal and concept drawing. They had concerns regarding the procurement of inscribed pebbles and thought it best that the council arrange purchase of these for customers and then recharge them to ensure consistency and fairness.

Members also requested an update to the Cemetery Terms and Conditions to ensure the integrity of the garden is maintained in relation to the above garden.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, an amendment is made to the Cemetery regulations and,
3. That, the project proceeds as proposed and,
4. That, a plaque is installed to explain the reason for the garden area

H563 **FINANCE REPORT: REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23 AND DRAFT BASE REVENUE BUDGET FOR 2023/24**

The committee received the report of the Town Clerk/CEO.

It was advised these were draft estimates based on current knowledge and final figures would be provided to the Full Council at the end of the budget-setting period.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

H564 **SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2023/24**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Town Clerk/C.E.O.

Members discussed the proposed increase of 10% in line with inflation. They felt it was unfortunate that an increase of this magnitude was required however understood that a significant increase would need to be applied. However, there were too many variables to decide until the entire budget had been drafted

The Committee also discussed a potential new Public Hall Group 4 charge to cover "Local Theatre Productions" which would be charged on the days on which dress rehearsals or performance occur. Members requested further information to be prepared by the Venue & Events Officer for a decision to be made by the CEWP.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted and,
2. That, the increase to fees & charges is reconsidered once the draft budget is complete and,
3. That, introduction of a new Group 4 charge be delegated to the Corn Exchange Working Party.

H565 **REVENUE GROWTH ITEMS, SPECIAL REVENUE PROJECTS AND CAPITAL PROJECTS**

The Committee received and considered the report and verbal update from the Town Clerk/CEO.

Members discussed the projects as proposed in the report and felt that refurbishment works at Burwell Hall toilets provision was potentially a priority but without knowing the urgency of the works it was difficult to judge with certainty. Given the estimated cost the Town Clerk advised that if works weren't urgent, it would be necessary to defer the project to 2024/25 to allow for additional budgeting.

Members reviewed the costs of a new projector and equipment for the Corn Exchange and asked that additional information is gathered by the Project Officer to allow a decision to be made. They were keen to proceed with the purchase of the suitable projector as soon as possible using the existing £20,000 budget. Also, members would like investigations into the use of National Theatre Encore as it was thought this may be a more cost-effective way of showing these types of performances in the future.

The committee discussed possible further projects for 2023/24 which included a new notice board at Windrush Cemetery, repainting of the Gallery Room and ceiling and replacement lights to facilitate more options for requests to light up the Corn Exchange.

Members also discussed the potential of marking the 160th Anniversary of the Corn Exchange with event(s), members delegated to the Corn Exchange Working Party to arrive at a budget for this.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, subject to urgency, refurbishment of Burwell Hall toilets be deferred until 2024/25
3. That, a new notice board for Windrush Cemetery be funded and,
4. That, a new lighting set up is funded for the lighting up of the Corn Exchange and,
5. That, quotes be obtained for the repainting of the Gallery Room walls and ceiling and,
6. That, 160th Anniversary Celebrations be delegated to the CEWP.

The meeting closed at: 7.18 pm

Chair