

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

**Held on Monday, 20 May 2024**

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

**Present:**

Councillor R Crouch (Chair)

Councillors:	D Edwards-Hughes D Newcombe R Smith	J Treloar (In place of J Robertshaw) A Bailey (In place of O Collins)
Officers:	Adam Clapton Derek Mackenzie  Sharon Groth Mark Lewis	Deputy Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk Town Clerk Head of Estates & Operations
Others:	No members of the public.	

**H261 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillors Enright and Aitman.

Further apologies were also received from Councillors Robertshaw and Collins, Councillors Treloar and Bailey attended as a substitute respectively.

The Deputy Town Clerk reminded members of the importance to inform the Committee Clerk should they be unable to attend a meeting as requested.

**H262 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers at this point.

Councillor J Treloar later declared a potential non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 8 as a relation may be a contractor for the proposed works to be carried out.

There were no other declarations from Members or Officers.

**H263 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Bailey and seconded by Councillor Crouch that Councillor D Enright be elected. There being no other nominations it was:

**Resolved:**

That, Councillor Duncan Enright be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2024/25 municipal year.

H264 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 11 March 2024 were received.

There were no matters arising.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 11 March 2024 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

H265 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

H266 **FINANCE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) detailing income and expenditure for budgets which were the responsibility of the committee.

A member raised a question in relation to the split of the Fizzy Friday and Loyalty drink promotion costs.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, further details is provided to members of the cost of promotions.

H267 **COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES & WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Committee received the report of the Town Clerk/CEO concerning the Committee Objectives & Work Plan for 2024/25.

A Member raised a question regarding the final cost of the works to improve the storage at the Corn Exchange. The Head of Estates & Operations confirmed this was slightly above the original budget of £5,000.

A further question arose regarding the need to link the fire alarm to the proposed security improvements for the Corn Exchange, the HE&O confirmed that this was not a legal requirement however Officers had been in contact with the supplier and the work to connect the external door entry and fire alarm system would be completed at no additional cost. Officers would ensure that the system is fully compliant.

The Town Clerk/CEO provided a update to confirm that the faculty for the work to repair the wall at St Marys Church had now been received and it is hoped that work would commence shortly.

Lastly, in response to a members question the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that a request via Section 106 had been included in the North Witney Development response in order to protect Witney heritage and address the Survey of the unused cemetery buildings (Ref: IS3).

**Resolved:**

1. That, the Committee Objectives & Work Plan for 2024/25 be noted and,
2. That, priority of the project be delegated to Officers.

H268 **PUBLIC HALLS REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Venue & Events Officer concerning an update on the council Public Halls.

Members were pleased to hear of the improved storage in the Corn Exchange and the immediate effect this had on improving the appearance.

Members then considered the options regarding Wireless or wired microphones in relation to the proposed new conferencing arrangements. Members provided personal experience of using wireless microphones and agreed the importance to ensure a high-quality output and also to future proof the installation given the potential for hybrid council meeting in the future.

The Committee welcomed the reintroduction of the Fizzy Friday event as proposed however asked that the opening hours of the Corn Exchange were advertised clearly in order to maximise the promotion and avoid disappointment to potential venue visitors.

A member questioned why the decision to run a promotion was required by the Committee, the Deputy Town Clerk advised that this was due to the additional cost of staffing requirements.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted.
2. That, wired microphones be the preferred choice when updating the conferencing system and,
3. That, the Fizzy Friday promotion recommence from 7 June 2024 and,
4. That, the Corn Exchange opening times be made clear.

H269 **CORN EXCHANGE BUSINESS REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Venue & Events Officer concerning the recent activity in the Public Halls.

Members were pleased to hear of the recent successful events and the proposals for the upcoming period and in particular the link up with the University of Gloucestershire and asked that an invitation be extended to students to attend a future meeting to allow them to present their work and for members to thank them directly.

The Committee considered the proposal for the live music events to start in June, all members agreed that this would be an excellent opportunity to promote the Corn Exchange and increase the cosmopolitan feeling on the square experienced in the summer months.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and,

2. That, an invitation be extended to the University of Gloucester to attend a future meeting and,
3. That, live music events commence from 14 June 2024.

**H270 PUBLIC HALLS BUSINESS PLAN REVIEW**

The Head of Estates & Operations advised the Committee that the Business Plan for both the Burwell Hall and Corn Exchange were in progress and therefore would be presented at the meeting of the Committee on 8 July 2024.

**H271 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC**

**Resolved:**

That, in accordance with section (1(2) of the Public Bodies (admission 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.

**H272 UPDATE ON PROPERTY MATTERS – LEASES & ASSETS**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report along with a verbal update from the Town Clerk/CEO.

Members received details from the Head of Estates & Operations regarding the options for repairs to be carried out to the Madley Park Hall dividing doors. Members were in agreement that Officers project manage the repairs and that an earmarked reserve be used to fund the repair.

Members proceeded to discuss the issues that had arisen with the running of the Witney Allotment Association (WAA), which covered allotment sites at Newland, Hailey Road, Windrush Place and Lakeside. Members agreed that the Council should issue a single lease to the WAA and allow them to arrange the administration, constitution and running of the allotments as they saw fit.

It was therefore proposed that the WAA be issued one lease they would then have the flexibility to operate separate “branches” for the allotments. The Town Clerk advised that it was necessary for the lease to include named individuals and therefore she would take legal advice to ensure that the lease would be workable and protected the council.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, Officers project manage the replacement of the Madley Park Hall internal dividing doors and, it be funded from the EMR,
3. That, subject to legal advice the Town Clerk arrange for a single lease with WAA be drawn up.

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The meeting closed at: 7.02 pm

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Chair