

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

Held on Monday, 5 June 2023

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

Present:

Councillor R Crouch (Chair)

Councillors:	D Enright O Collins J Aitman D Edwards-Hughes	D Newcombe J Treloar R Smith
Officers:	Sharon Groth Mark Lewis Derek Mackenzie	Town Clerk Head of Estates & Operations Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	None.	

H269 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

H270 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

H271 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

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

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Duncan Enright be elected. There being no other nominations it was:

Resolved:

That, Councillor Duncan Enright be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2023/2024 municipal year.

H272 MINUTES

The minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 13 March 2023 were received.

P138 -The Town Clerk gave an update, advising that the meeting offered to the funeral director had been declined so the pre-sold plans would be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

P139 - The Town Clerk also updated the Committee on, additional complaints had been received about the exercising of dogs and anti-social behaviour. Officers would be installing additional signage to advise of the rules of the cemetery.

A Member spoke to say that she had received lots of positive feedback about the pedestrian gate.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 13 March 2023 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

H273 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

H274 **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk along with the Committee's current terms of reference.

The Town Clerk corrected a point in the report to advise that the Council still owned the Park Road Allotment and therefore it must remain in the Terms of Reference.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Committee terms of reference be agreed and published including the above amendment.

H275 **COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Committee received and considered the report and of the Town Clerk/C.E.O along with verbal clarification, concerning its objectives and work programme for the forthcoming year.

The Town Clerk gave Members a summary of the history of Madley Park Hall including the details of the funding provided by the Council. The Lease had expired, and she was due to meet with the Chair of Madley Park Hall so would provide an update following the meeting.

The Leader of the council asked Members for items they wished to add to the Work Programme. The suggestion of Cycle Racks for St Marys, Church Green was the only request.

A Member asked why commencement of items listed in the adopted Open Spaces Strategy had lapsed. The Town Clerk advised that the other projects had received priority.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,

2. That, the current objective and work programme be agreed and,
3. That, Cycle Racks at St Marys, Church Green be added to the plan for further consideration by officers.

H276 FINANCE REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) which summarised the budgets under its remit, along with associated costs centres and codes.

Members were pleased services were operating within budget. The Town Clerk provided clarification to the reference to Outside Services (O/S) and Central Services (C/S)

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

H277 PUBLIC HALLS REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Venue & Events Officer which provided an update on activity in the Public Halls since the last meeting.

Members expressed their thanks for all the work which had gone into the Corn Exchange. The return of groups to the halls was evidence that the feedback from the groups had been listened to and actioned.

Members discussed the proposal to paint the Gallery Room, Bar and Staircase and were unanimous in agreement for these works to proceed. The Clerk confirmed that funds were available in the Corn Exchange earmarked reserve.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, painting of the Gallery Room, Bar Area and Staircase should proceed, funded from the Public Halls earmarked reserve.

H278 RETRACTABLE SEATING SPONSORSHIP

Members received and considered the report of the Project Officer in relation to the sponsorship of seating within the Corn Exchange.

Members discussed the possibility of a corporate membership being offered alongside that of individual. Members also discussed the potential offering of discounted tickets, a regular newsletter and a patron's survey.

The Committee also asked for the option of positioning of the plaque on the back of the seat rather than the base is explored.

It was proposed and seconded that a corporate membership be offered for £200 and the Individual for £100, each to last five years and provide two Cinema Tickets and Priority Booking. The Corporate membership would receive four free glasses of Prosecco and the Individual two glasses. A vote took place, and all members were in favour of the proposal.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, both a corporate and individual membership be offered for a 5-year term and,
3. That, membership includes two Cinema Tickets and Priority Booking and Prosecco, four glasses for Corporate and two glasses for individual.
4. That, the option to position plaques on the back of the seat is explored by the Project Officer.

H279 BURWELL HALL HEATING SYSTEM UPDATE

The Committee received the report of the Project Officer and a verbal update from the Head of Operations who explained the reasons for suggesting the decision to proceed with the Fuel Cell Boiler be rescinded.

Members were dispirited to hear the Council would not be proceeding with the more climate friendly option, however Members understood why the more reliable option of a replacement Gas boiler needed to be sought. That, along with a control module and remote access the council would significantly reduce its gas consumption.

All members were in favour of rescinding the decision to purchase the Fuel Cell boiler and agreeing to the purchase of a new gas boiler to be delegated to officers.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, Standing Orders be adjourned to rescind the decision to purchase and install the Micro Fuel Cell CHP Boiler and,
3. That, purchase of a new gas boiler with modern control and remote access be agreed and delegated to officers.

H280 SUBSIDED HALL HIRE - VOLUNTEER LINK UP

The Committee received and considered the subsidised hall hire request from Volunteer Link Up (VLU).

All members agreed that VLU did an amazing job and were very happy to support their 40th Birthday celebrations by way of a subsidised rental of the Corn Exchange to the value of £147.

Recommended:

That, the subsidised hall hire request from Volunteer Link Up be granted (Value £147).

H281 CEMETERY OF THE YEAR AWARDS

The Committee received a verbal report from the Committee Clerk.

Members were keen to enter this annual competition and welcomed feedback from the Cemetery of the Year Awards judging to improve the services provided in Windrush Cemetery.

Resolved:

1. That, the verbal report be noted and,
2. That, Windrush Cemetery is entered into the Cemetery of the Year competition for 2023.

H282 COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVE SIGN

The Committee received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk regarding the proposed installation of a sign to identify Commonwealth War Graves which are located in Tower Hill Cemetery.

Members were very keen to proceed, a member believed that there was also a grave in Holy Trinity churchyard and asked that officers investigate this, and if correct request that a sign is installed there also.

Members asked that the standard sized sign is installed (430mm x 230mm) to ensure it is visible and that information is prepared on the war graves and made available to visitors to the cemetery.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, an application be made for installation of a sign at Tower Hill Cemetery and,
3. That, officers investigate if a sign at Holy Trinity is required and,
4. That, officers produce information for noticeboard of the graves in Tower Hill.

H283 HOLY TRINITY BOUNDARY WALL RAILINGS

The Committee received the report of the Operations Manager.

Members were concerned about the quality of finish which might be carried out by the Probation team who had approached the Church about decoration and maintenance to the railings here, particularly as the work was not currently required and these were untrained individuals working at such a sensitive site. A vote was taken, and seven members were in favour of refusing the request, there was one abstention.

All members agreed that the decision to paint the railing should be deferred to 2024/25

A member suggested that there may be alternative work that the probation team could carry out. The Chair will investigate if this is a possibility.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the request from Holy Trinity Church for the probation service to carry out work be refused and,
3. That, the Chair investigates alternative options for work.

H284 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.

H285 **CORN EXCHANGE BUSINESS PLAN**

The Committee received the report of the Venue & Events Officer outlining the plan for the Corn Exchange.

Members discussed the current mission statement for the Corn Exchange and requested only a change from “create” to “maintain” a small community arts facility.

Members were pleased to see the detailed plan. The Leader of the Council encouraged members to provide feedback and ideas of how the Council proceeds with the business plan.

Members were also encouraged to see the variety of events and that groups returning to the Corn Exchange providing a better offering. Members would like to see more art displays in the café area, folk nights and open mic events. They also noted the desire to seek grant funding to support the venue and look forward with interest to seeing the progressed profit margins as mentioned in the plan.

The Committee asked that an earmark reserve for technology replacement is arranged to ensure the significant investment is protected.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, that the mission statement be amended to read “maintain” and,
3. That, the point made and referred to are incorporated into the final business plan and,
4. That, a technology earmarked reserve be established.

The meeting closed at: 7.18 pm

Chair