

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 6 November 2023

Title: Public Halls Report

Contact Officer: Venue & Events Officer

Background

The Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall have come to the end of the summer months and look forward towards the Autumn and Winter season. Term time groups are back to regular sessions and the café will look to facilitate additional indoor tables as the weather gets cooler.

Current Situation

Corn Exchange

The Corn Exchange has undergone fresh decoration from local decorators to enhance the look of the Gallery Room, staircase and bar area, the colours are from the Heritage range with sage green in the bar and stairs and light grey in the Gallery Room. The new colour palette helps keep the hall looking smart and compliments the new carpet that was installed last year. It is hoped that the neutral grey colour of the Gallery Room will reflect feedback received by Officers regarding use as a wedding venue, allowing for individuals to decorate as they see fit from a blank starting point. The staff have received very positive feedback from many of our customers and hiring groups.

Officers are moving closer to a solution for the storage of the tables and free-standing chairs in the main hall. Two areas have been identified, one at the rear of the hall that can be adapted to act as a suitable storage area and another where one of the two stairwells to the green rooms could be converted.

Both of these solutions will improve the appearance of the Corn Exchange, access for performances and reduce the time taken for setting up and clearing for hall and room hiring groups.

Design and associated costs are being prepared for review.

Projector Screen

The old 4m projector screen that used to be in the Main Hall that was replaced with the new 6m screen is now being considered for use in the Gallery room. A projector screen installed on to a wall with a permeant projector fitted will improve the IT facilities and attract more customers and businesses to hire the venue.

The Venue and Events Officer will research the most suitable design and products with associated costs for review.

Burwell Hall

The new heating and hot water boilers have been installed enabling Officers to now control the heating in the hall via a remote portal that allows the temperature to be set daily according to the groups who are using the hall. This will enhance the customer experience and the reduction in energy usage, costs and impact on the environment will be monitored and reported at future committee meetings.

1863

1863 continues to be busy with no drop in customers that has been experienced in September/October before the traditionally busier festive season. The new café and Bar Manager is in post and working hard to update the offer the café provides, as well as providing a friendly focal point for customers and staff to work with.

New high street neighbours, Gails bakery, have recently opened in the old M&Co building, which is likely to bring more footfall to this part of town which in turn will hopefully encourage people to visit the Corn Exchange. Officers continue to put out signage daily to showcase the offer from the hall which helps provide a highly visible high street presence.

The pavement licence has been applied for again, and again this year the fee of £100 has not been applied (covid related support action). Officers are exploring how they can make full use of the area the licence covers that stretches all the way to the road in front of the Corn Exchange.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make regarding its facilities and services it operates.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Financial implications

Described here or as stated in the report above.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

- The storage in the Main Hall is being reviewed with recommendations to follow at a future meeting.