

## HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Monday 22 January 2024  
**Title:** Public Halls Report  
**Contact Officer:** Venue & Events Officer - Tomas Smith

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### Background

The Christmas season has finished, the Halls are continuing to be operated in a way which best suits the needs of the Council. Burwell Hall and the Corn Exchange have welcomed back all their regular hirers who have finished their Christmas break.

### Current Situation

The Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall are both entering the New Year on the back of busy Festive season, January presents a good opportunity to get on top of any necessary operational maintenance work that requires to be undertaken before the hall traditionally gets busier in February. Having discussed the impact of a shut down in the Hall the Venue and Events Officer and the Head of Estates and Operations have proposed that any Maintenance in future should be completed on an ad-hoc basis to prevent any disruption to hirers and loss of income for the hall.

Burwell Hall maintenance is regularly scheduled for August when there are less groups using the hall, although the idea is for Burwell Hall to come in line with the Corn Exchange and not have a shutdown and any maintenance being undertaken on an ad-hoc basis.

The new heating and hot water system at Burwell Hall continues to save on energy usage.

Period	Reduction in gas (kWh's)	Reduction in CO2	Savings on gas bill
Oct 23 to Dec 23	1,146	210	£2,165.94

### Maintenance week

The Corn Exchange is closed for a week for maintenance to be undertaken, this is work that is essential to maintain the standards of the building and work is programmed into a detailed jobs list for the works team to action throughout the week.

## 1863 Maintenance

1863 was closed for 2 days which allowed essential decoration, mostly the work was focussed on behind the scenes work which will benefit the smooth running of the café, the café staff have also given the café a deep clean, had the coffee machine serviced and organised the kitchens to optimise efficiency when open. New shelving was installed to help with storage and new shutters were painted and installed at the front of the café.

Café staff have been trained on company procedure during the shutdown with best working practise being the focus, as well as bringing the team together and agreeing on the goals for the café.

## The Corn Exchange Maintenance

Work has been completed decorating the rear wall of the seating to give the entrance to the Main Hall a finished look, the events team feel that this will enhance the user experience in the hall and give a complete look to the tiered seating. Other works to be undertaken are the repainting of the bannisters and general repairs in toilets and green rooms.



## Cost implication

The shutdown week does impact the Corn Exchanges revenue streams and rough cost for loss of hirers is as follows:

- 1863 – two days trading (average £450, less operating margin) £540.00
- Hall Hire: Not including WTC meetings this week would have been £579.75
- **Total: £1119.75 loss of projected earnings.**

Officers are looking at how we can reduce or even avoid any losses for future maintenance.

## Storage

The storage of tables and chairs has always proved to be a problem in the Corn Exchange. When not in use these are placed at various locations around the Corn Exchange which can be considered unsightly, mark and damage walls and increase the risk to health and safety. Officers have reviewed options to resolve this issue and identified 3 areas that can be adapted to be suitable for storage.

Local contractors were approached to survey and provide quotations which are detailed in the table below.

Contractor	Stage Storage	Hall Passageway Storage	Understairs	TOTAL	Variance to lowest Quote
Option 1	£2,350	£1,145	£1,195	£4,690	£0
Option 2	£2,581	£1,184	£1,541	£5,306	£616
Option 3	£2,955	£1,717	£1,421	£6,093	£1,403

Our recommendation is to issue instruction to Option 1 to adapt areas behind one side of the stage, the hall passageway and under the stairs.

## Blue Plaque

The Plaque on the corner of the Corn Exchange has been refurbished.



## **Staffing**

A new caretaker has been recruited and replaces the one who retired in October. This brings the caretaker staff up to their full complement and allows for greater flexibility from an operational perspective.

## **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.

- Cost of the shutdown period and loss of revenue from 1863 during this period.

## **Recommendations**

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

1. To approve instruction to be issued for the contractor to proceed in providing storage areas in the Corn Exchange.