

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

Held on Monday, 11 March 2024

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:	Adam Clapton Sharon Groth Mark Lewis Derek Mackenzie	Deputy Town Clerk Town Clerk Head of Estates & Operations Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	None.	

H126 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received

H127 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor O Collins declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest Agenda Item 7 for by virtue of knowing the promoter of the "Over the Hill" festival.

H128 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments Committee meeting held on 22 January 2024 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments Committee meeting held on 22 January 2024 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

H129 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

H130 **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.

In response to a Member's question, the Town Clerk confirmed that the rent review for the lease of Langdale Hall and was set out in the terms of the lease and would be enacted accordingly

Members were pleased to see the detailed commentary in the report relating to the letting and Corn Exchange café income.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

H131 **PUBLIC HALLS REPORT**

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

Members were pleased to hear that improvements were being considered for a screen, projector and conferencing facilities and they welcomed the visual demonstration from the Head of Estates & Operations as to how these would be installed in the Gallery Room.

Members asked if consideration could be given to a wireless conferencing set up and that officers investigate any potential grant funding options such as those secured by the District Council for their refurbished meeting chamber. Members were all in agreement that they were happy for officers to proceed with the acquisition up to a cost of £7,500.

The Committee also looked forward to seeing the new storage solutions installed in the Corn Exchange which was due to commence on 16 April 2024.

Members then considered a request from White Feather Spiritual Events to reduce their hire period from four to three hours which fell outside of usual Council policy. Members were in agreement subject to the review conditions noted in the report.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the purchase of conferencing equipment be delegated to the Head of Estates & Operations up to a maximum of £7,500, utilising funds from the General Reserve and,
3. That, wireless options are explored for the above conferring equipment and,
4. That, the request from White Feather Spiritual Events to reduce to a 3-hour hire period be agreed subject to the regular review as set out in the report.

H132 **PUBLIC HALLS BUSINESS REPORT**

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

The Committee was pleased to see the events being planned, including the direct management of the monthly comedy night at the Corn Exchange; the success of the event would be monitored in the coming months. Officers advised wedding packages would also be presented at the next Committee meeting.

Members were presented with a proposal from the promoter of the “Over the Hill” festival, which was being held on the August Bank Holiday, as noted in the report.

Members were happy to hear of alternative approaches which would potentially encourage acts and promoters to use the venue however, wanted clarification on the request of this particular ticket sales split. Members asked that Officers review it with the promoter so that the agreement was clear and speak to a previous venue that hosted the event for feedback.

All Members, excluding Councillor Collins, agreed that the decision be delegated to the Head of Estates & Operations to agree the level of remuneration the Council would receive.

A Member expressed their pride with the presentation of the Corn Exchange for the recent Civic Reception; it was shown at its best and provided a great advertisement for its use as a versatile event venue.

The Deputy Town Clerk provided details of a request from Thames Valley Police for subsidised letting to hold the launch of a new initiative “Through Their Eyes” which would educate secondary school pupils on the effects of crime on the police and community, this would be held in the Corn Exchange on 26th March 2024.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, delegation be given to Officers to investigate the proposal for the “Over the Hill” event further and agree the level of remuneration and,
3. That, the request from Thames Valley Police be approved for the subsidised let of the Corn Exchange Main Hall for the “through their eyes” event, at a cost of £175.

H133 CORN EXCHANGE ILLUMINATION POLICY REVIEW

The Committee received and considered the Corn Exchange Illumination Policy which was due for review.

The Committee agreed the illumination generally worked well and were in favour of renewing agreements already put in place by the previous administration.

Members asked that those requesting illuminations during summer months be advised that due to the nature of the lighting system that they may not be visible until late in the evening along with any request where Officers were aware that the lighting would be delayed due to a Gallery Room booking.

All Members were in agreement with the readoption of the policy.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised of two new requests which had been received to highlight Parkinson UK and World Down Syndrome Day. Members agreed that these should be permitted.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Illumination of Corn Exchange for Events Policy be readopted and,

3. That, the requests to light up the Corn Exchange for Parkinson UK and World Down Syndrome Day be approved.

H134 **CLOSED CHURCHYARDS UPDATE**

The Committee received the report of the Operations Manager updating on the progress of works in the two closed churchyards maintained by the Town Council.

The Town Clerk advised the Operations Manager would ensure the work was completed as soon as authority was received from the Diocese.

Resolved:

That, the report and verbal update be noted.

H135 **PROJECTS UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update from Officers on the progress of the ongoing projects.

Members were advised that there had been some delays to the smaller ongoing projects following the absence of the Project Officer however, these would now recommence.

The work to install the Mapping posts in Windrush Cemetery would take place once clarification of the final cost was received from the supplier.

Resolved:

That, the verbal report be noted.

The meeting closed at: 6.45 pm

Chair