

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Terms of Reference

Meeting Date: Monday, 19th May 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is for Members to review and recommend terms of reference for the Committee for the forthcoming municipal year.

Background

At the Annual Council Meeting held on 7th May 2025, it was resolved that terms of reference for each Committee would be reviewed at each meeting in the current meeting cycle.

Current Situation

The current terms of Reference for the Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments Committee are:

- a) To operate, maintain and control the Corn Exchange, Burwell Hall, Langdale Hall and Madley Park Hall in all matters relative to their use as public halls be it through direct management or via trusteeships;
- b) The operation of such other buildings as the Council may from time to time acquire if so instructed;
- c) To operate and maintain the Cemeteries, burial responsibilities and associated duties, consequential to Statutory or Council requirements, together with the War Memorials;
- d) To carry out the Council's obligations with regard to the Closed Churchyards of St Mary's and Holy Trinity.
- e) To maintain and supervise the Park Road Allotment site and oversee the management of Hailey Road, Lakeside, Newland and Windrush Place Allotments whilst leased to the Witney Allotment Association;
- f) The Membership of the Committee shall consist of 6 Members plus the Town Mayor and the Leader of the Council ex officio with voting rights;
- g) The quorum of the Committee shall be 4 Members.

The Committee is asked if it would like to make any amendments to the terms for the forthcoming municipal year. The Committee may like to consider the following:

- (e) To oversee the management of Hailey Road, Lakeside, Newland and Windrush Place Allotments whilst leased to the Witney Allotment Association.
And,
- To oversee the development and management of the Corn Exchange (including the 1863 café bar) as a community hub and arts centre in line with the Council's vision and long-term business plan for the venue.

- Within all its decision making ensure that the green environment and biodiversity of public open spaces is protected and enhanced in line with the Council's Climate Emergency aspirations.
- To oversee any development and investment in Council-owned public halls, and the supporting infrastructure, ensuring they meet the needs of the community, remain safe and compliant.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – no direct implications.
- b) Biodiversity – no direct implications.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct implications.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct implications.

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.

Without clear terms of reference, Council committees face significant risks including role confusion, lack of accountability, and potential legal challenges. This can lead to inefficient decision-making, strategic misalignment, resource misallocation, and reduced transparency. The absence of defined responsibilities and authority undermines governance, impairs stakeholder trust, and can result in poor outcomes that do not align with the council's objectives. Clear, regularly reviewed terms of reference are essential to ensure effective, transparent, and accountable committee operations.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Review the terms of reference; and
2. Consider any changes to the terms of reference; and
3. Recommend such changes be made to Full Council on 23rd June 2025.