
Agenda Item: Public Halls Report

Meeting Date: Monday, 7th July 2025

Contact Officer: Venue & Events Officer

The purpose of this report is to provide updates and seek direction for the operation and management of the two public halls under the ownership and management of Witney Town Council. These facilities serve as vital community spaces for events, meetings, and public activities, providing an accessible environment for residents and local organisations. It is important that these halls are maintained to a high standard, both in terms of physical condition and service delivery, to ensure that they meet the needs of the local community and support the Town Council's strategic objectives.

Background

In line with the Witney Town Council's commitment to creating vibrant, inclusive public spaces, the operation of these halls must align with council policies and ensure that they remain accessible, well-maintained, and effectively managed. As part of its overarching mission, the Town Council has set forth several guidelines regarding the management, booking, maintenance, and use of these halls to ensure they are operated in accordance with the highest standards of safety, accessibility, and community engagement.

Current Situation

A Venue and Events Co-ordinator vacancy in the team have been recruited with the successful applicant due to start at the beginning of August. The Venue & Events Officer has been focussing on maintaining the operational services expected across Public Halls and Events and can provide the following report.

TVAA Clothes Recycling Unit

An agreement has been signed with the Thames Valley Air Ambulance and Recycling Solutions for the placement of a clothes recycling unit outside Burwell Hall. This has now been delivered and installed outside the hall.



Seat Sponsorship

The Venue & Events Officer has reviewed the previously agreed seat sponsorship project, last visited in 2023 as detailed below. It has been determined an increased level of research is required to determine the viability, participation and likely outcome.

The below was resolved on 5th June 2023:

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.

- 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.*

The financial implications were:

- *The cost of ten plaques is £100.*
- *The cost of sponsoring one seat is £150.*
- *There is a minimal cost for the administration of the scheme and the certificate; and the admin for advising sponsors of priority booking periods. There will also be the cost of the two glasses of prosecco – cost price is £2.34. Numbered vouchers will be given to ensure that the sponsor cannot use them more than once.*

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 – Providing a supportive environment for people to express themselves through creativity.
- b) Biodiversity – All matters relating to Biodiversity will be considered when making decisions for both halls – The recycling of clothing provides many benefits such as conserving water resources and minimizing waste and pollution, ultimately lessening the strain on natural habitats and ecosystems
- c) Crime & Disorder – The continued use of halls as a safe space
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – Recycling of clothing also reduces the demand for new raw materials and energy and avoids the release of methane from decomposing textiles

Risk

- The **TVAA** recycling bin at Burwell, if not managed properly could look untidy and cause negative reaction to the local community. RS have stated that they will respond promptly to any reports of items being dumped in this location.

Social Value

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

1. By allowing the **TVAA** clothes recycling bin to be installed at Burwell Hall, WTC will be supporting an accessible way for the community to reduce textile waste, support sustainable practices, and extend the life of usable clothing through reuse or responsible recycling.
2. The Seat Sponsorship initiative is an opportunity for community engagement with the Corn Exchange.

Financial implications

- The cost of 10 plaques was quoted at £100 in 2023. A review of this will take place to determine an up-to-date cost with options and will be reported back in the next meeting cycle.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and;

1. Comment on any changes or suggestions that can support the seat sponsorship project.