

HALLS CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Public Halls Report

Meeting Date: 14th September 2026

Contact Officer: Venue & Events Officer

The purpose of this report is to provide operational updates regarding the management of Witney Town Council's venues and seek recommendations for operational actions.

Current Situation

Assistive Listening Project

Officers have sourced the Contacta Portable Induction Loop systems for the admin office and 1863 Café and Bar counter.

Officers have secured a quotation within the available budget for the installation of an Auracast assistive listening system in the Main Hall and an infrared system in the Gallery Room at The Corn Exchange. The proposed supplier has an established and positive working relationship with the venue and is therefore well placed to integrate the new systems with the venue's existing audio equipment.

The available budget does not extend to the installation of an assistive listening system at Burwell Hall during the current financial year. However, a budget has been earmarked for future refurbishment works at Burwell Hall. As these plans develop, consideration can be given to incorporating an appropriate assistive listening solution alongside audio system improvements.

It is recommended that Officers proceed with the installation of the Auracast and infrared systems at The Corn Exchange, whilst incorporating provision for an appropriate assistive listening system at Burwell Hall into a wider refurbishment and audio upgrade project.

Sanitary Bins in Men's Toilets

Following discussions with a local resident and campaigner raising awareness through the "Boys Need Bins" campaign, the Officer is working with the Council's current sanitary waste supplier to explore the introduction of sanitary bins within the male toilets at The Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall. The Boys Need Bins campaign, aims to ensure men who use stoma bags, incontinence pads or other continence products have somewhere hygienic to dispose of waste.

Providing sanitary bins in all toilet cubicles would improve access to appropriate sanitary waste facilities for individuals who may require them, including those living with conditions such as Crohn's disease and colitis.

Corporate Strategy

The Council's Strategic Plan 2025–29 sets out the Council's long-term priorities and direction, supporting its mission to 'make Witney a great place to live, work and visit.' This report contributes to the delivery of the following strategic pillar of the plan:

4. A Respectful Community

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 – The proposed assistive listening technology will improve accessibility and participation for people with hearing loss or other hearing impairments, supporting their equal access to the Council's facilities and events.

Providing sanitary bins in male toilets will support equal access to appropriate sanitary facilities for all users, including men and boys who require them, helping to ensure the facilities are inclusive and accessible.

- b) Biodiversity -
- c) Crime & Disorder -
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency -

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.

Social Value

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

Financial implications

1. The cost of the assistive listening installation in the main hall and gallery room is **£11,378.33**
2. The cost of the Contacta Portable Induction Loops is **£215.99** each, totalling **£431.98**.
3. The cost of adding additional sanitary bins into the male cubicles at Corn Exchange (3 cubicles) and Burwell Hall (1 cubicle) is **£46.00 per quarter**.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and

1. Approve the installation of the Auracast and Infrared systems at The Corn Exchange and defer the Burwell Hall system to form part of the wider refurbishment of the venue.