

Corn Exchange Working Party

Date: 9th March 2020

Title: Proposed Café and Bar

Contact Officer: Venue Manager (Tomas Smith)

Background

Members will recall that the Council has previously agreed to introduce a café and bar into the lobby of the Corn Exchange so that we can maximise profit from the venue. This will include coffee and tea facilities as well as light snacks to be available throughout the day.

Current situation

The Council currently outsources bar companies to help on events which although useful and low risk, provide no financial income to the council. The intention is to operate as a café by day and a bar at night for events and not every night. For this to function to a high professional level we will need to purchase or hire relevant equipment and a till system. We also are looking to furnish the lobby with updated seating and tables as the current seating is more functional rather than keeping with the aesthetic of the building.

The Working Party also needs to factor in kitchen equipment, till systems and finally a name for the café and bar. I have researched these options and have recommendations below. Once a café and bar area are agreed we can move forward with the installation of the café equipment. Regarding coffee machines, and coffee supplier I have asked local coffee roasters, but none were interested so I have contacted Cool beans coffee (nationwide) and Rave Coffee of Cirencester.

Environmental Impact

Minimum, wood for the bar design will be sourced from reclaimed material and from sustainable forests. All coffee will be Fairtrade and products sold in the cafe will be local.

Risk

Making a viable and successful venue which can sit comfortably in the heart of Witney while providing a service to both Hall users and general public alike. We need to create a brand identity in order to stand out from the crowd and prove successful.

Financial Implications

Details of the quotes received are summarised on the attached confidential appendix along with the quotations received for information.

At the end of the financial year it is normal practice to transfer underspends in respect of property maintenance and equipment into the Public Halls Earmarked Reserve – for this reason Officers, at this stage, have identified an underspend in the 2019-20 budget for Public Halls cost centres totalling approximately £11,000 which could be used towards the cost of the café/bar.

A grant application has been submitted to Witney Town Hall Charity for £1,500 towards the cost of the furniture in the café/bar (due to imminent meeting).

The cost of the bar/café counter could be covered from Section 106 contributions (see agenda item 6 for details) but this would diminish the amount available for other parts of the project.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report; and,

1. Consider a name for the proposed café/bar at the Corn Exchange. The original name of the area proposed for the café/bar was the Athenaeum Room as historically, in 1863 the Witney Athenaeum group met in that space. i.e. 'The Athenaeum',
2. Consider and decide on a quote for the bar,
3. Consider and decide on a quote for the furniture,
4. Consider the quotes for Coffee Machine hire,
5. Note the cost of equipment and associated works for this to be created.

Appendices

APPENDIX A – Bar Quotes

APPENDIX B – Furniture Quotes

APPENDIX C – Kitchen Equipment/Coffee Machine Hire Quotes