

**CORN EXCHANGE WORKING PARTY MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Tuesday, 10 March 2020

At 4.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	L Ashbourne J Aitman	L Duncan J King
Officers:	Sharon Groth Adam Clapton Tomas Smith	Town Clerk Office Manager Venue Manager
Others:	none	

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology of absence was received from Cllr D Harvey.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared at the meeting.

3 MINUTES

Members received and considered the minutes of the Corn Exchange Working Party held on 16 January 2020.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the minutes of the Corn Exchange Working Party meeting held on 16 January 2020 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 OXFORD ARTS CONSULTANTS DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN

The Working Party received and considered the report of the Venue Manager alongside a draft business plan for the Corn Exchange provided by Oxford Arts Consultants.

It was agreed that the plan was beneficial moving forward with the project and helped reinforce the actions already being planned. Members felt that discussions on acoustics and sound proofing should be brought forward in the plan and that further advice should be sought from Oxford Arts Consultants in this area. It was further agreed that the document provided would be clearer if items were listed chronologically as well as by category.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that direction is sought from Oxford Consultants concerning light and sound, including acoustics at the earliest opportunity and that this is brought forward to year one on the business plan,
2. that the action plan is edited so it is viewable chronologically as well as by category.

5 **WEBSITE & BRANDING**

The Working Party received and considered the report of the Venue Manager concerning potential branding and a new website for the Corn Exchange.

Quotations had been sought from several local companies and all had reached a similar price. It was agreed that the ability to update a website regularly in-house was imperative and it needed to look professional, have the right style, be simple to use and most importantly grow alongside the business. The branding would need to follow similar principles and a selection should be created in the first instance for agreement with councillors.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that Witney Town Council accepts the quotation from Ruml for website and visual identity at the Corn Exchange for the sum of £4120 (exc. VAT); and that this be funded from:
 - £2000 underspend on 2019-20 revenue line 4032/104 (Corn Exchange publicity)
 - £2120 from the 2020-21 revenue budget for digital signage
 - £1000 underspend on 2019-20 revenue line 4032/104 (Corn Exchange Publicity) towards ongoing maintenance

6 **PROVISION OF SEATING, LIGHT & SOUND**

Members received and considered the report of the Venue Manager concerning the provision of seating, light and sound in the Main Hall of the Corn Exchange.

Quotes had been received from local companies which had offered varying numbers of seats, benches and a vormalory, some which had acoustic possibilities. Quotes for lighting appeared to be at varying scales of cost and sound might be dependent on the area taken by the seats. Members agreed that preferred suppliers for both should attend a meeting at the Corn Exchange with the Operations and Estates Officer and members to discuss possibilities and ask for final quotes.

RECOMMENDED:

1. That a further meeting is held with the Working Party's preferred suppliers for retractable seating and lighting/sound with members and the Operations and Estates Officer at the earliest opportunity,
 - a) And that further quotes are received based on this meeting to be reviewed by Oxford Arts Consultants and presented to the next meeting of this Working Party.

2. That future Lighting, sound and seating at the Corn Exchange be funded from:

- £6461 earmarked reserve set in 2018-19,
- Section 106 funding – Springfield Nurseries, Witney (£45,000 to be split between this and the café/bar costs),
- Section 106 funding – West Witney Development (£100,000 to be paid in stages),
- Potential Community Facilities Grant from West Oxfordshire District Council.

7 **PROPOSED CAFE/BAR AREA**

The Working Party received the report of the Venue Manager concerning the proposed café/bar at the Corn Exchange.

Several quotes were also presented to the committee on the creation of the bar, furniture, equipment and hire charges. Visual ideas were also presented and members agreed that the style of the bar and furniture should be sympathetic to such a historic and well-loved building.

Costs would be kept as low as possible and this would be helped by the fact that it would be run in-house. The only fixed structure would be the curved bar itself so the rest of the area could be kept as versatile as possible.

RECOMMENDED:

1. That Witney Town Council accepts the quotation from Buildrite to design, create and install a bespoke bar in the lobby of the Corn Exchange for £16,700,
2. That Witney Town Council accepts the hire terms of the Cool Bean Coffee Company,
3. That Witney Town Council accepts the quotations for associated kitchen equipment for the café/bar area,
4. That the Venue Manager contacts the Working Party's preferred furniture supplier regarding the quotation offered,
5. That quotes are sought for the associated infrastructure works, such as plumbing and electricity before contractors are commissioned.
6. And that these be funded from:
 - £11,000 from an underspend on 2019-20 Corn Exchange budget lines,
 - £6250 from Section 106 funding – Abbey Developments, Thorney Leys, Witney,
 - £1500 from potential grant-funding,
 - Unspecified costs from Section 106 funding, Springfield Nurseries Development, Witney (funds available £45,000)
7. that the café/bar be known as '1863' at the Corn Exchange.

8 **CORN EXCHANGE - POSSIBLE PHASE THREE REFURBISHMENT**

The Working Party received a verbal report from the Office Manager on the potential to extend or reconfigure the backstage area of the Corn Exchange as a further phase of development.

It was advised that a site visit had taken place with a Planning Conservation Officer from the District Council. It was suggested that although extension upwards may be possible, it would be simpler to work out whether the requirements of the Council would be possible within the existing floor space. Any extension would need the input of a conservation architect as the circular window at the rear of the Main Hall would need to be made a feature.

RECOMMENDED:

1. That officers prepare floor plans of the Corn Exchange backstage area with potential plans of how the space could be reconfigured.

The meeting closed at: 5.30 pm

Chair