

**HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 29 June 2020

At 6.00 pm in the VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM - Virtual Meeting

Present:

Councillor M Jones (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	L Duncan
	L Ashbourne	V Gwatkin
	T Ashby	J King
	O Collins	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Office Manager
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	John Hickman	Operations & Estates Officer
	Tomas Smith	Venue Manager
Others:	None.	

H155 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

H156 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

H157 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED: that Cllr Gwatkin be elected Vice Chair for the municipal year.

H158 MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Halls & Green Spaces Committee meeting held on 9 March 2020 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record, alongside the Chair of the Sport & Play Committee as the work for the municipal year had been split over two new Committees accordingly.

There were no matters arising.

H159 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present for this item.

H160 **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, VISION AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

Members received and considered draft terms of reference for the Committee. A member asked if Windrush Place Allotments could be included.

RESOLVED: that the terms of reference as presented be accepted with the addition of Windrush Place allotments.

H161 **OPERATIONAL REPORT - PROGRESS ON IMPROVEMENTS AND REPAIRS SINCE THE LAST MEETING**

Members received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. He advised that there was no evidence of bats in the cedar of Lebanon tree according to the survey and the tree surgeon was now resurveying the tree with a view to it being removed in the near future.

A member asked how far the Council had got with rebuilding the arch and the wall at St. Mary's Churchyard. The Officer advised that the faculties had now been applied for and the PCC had given permission. He was awaiting additional information from the stone mason to add to the faculty applications.

A member asked for communication to be put out before the tree was finally taken down. The Communications and Events Officer would be asked to do so.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

H162 **RENEWABLE ENERGY**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Compliance and Environment Officer. A member commended the report and the fact that it looked into the most modern ways of mitigating the Council's carbon footprint.

Another member wondered whether it would be worth commissioning for example the Energy Saving Trust to offer detailed advice. The Leader agreed with this and wondered if the Trust might do a project looking across the Council, including vehicles etc. She thought this might help with future budget setting.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the Energy Saving Trust be asked to look into energy saving across the Council.

H163 **ALLOTMENTS**

The Operations and Estates Officer reported that he had not been able to complete Planning applications for oversized polytunnels as he had been shielding. He would be able to go out soon. The Allotment Association had now come back with recommendations for siting some composting tumblers and daleks and the type it favoured. The Association had also asked for concrete block bases and block walls at Lakeside and the new West Witney Allotments and had requested that the Town Council "turns" the amount of green waste on both of those sites for a

year. These recommendations from the Association had only just been received. The Council had agreed to provide some assistance as it no longer provided skips. The costs of the requested items were less than the skips would have cost.

A member expressed concerns that the items might fill up quickly and then the Association would be asking for more.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. to agree to the Allotment Association's requests for the tumblers, daleks and Town Council assistance at Lakeside and West Witney on the condition that the exact requirements and services offered by the Town Council were specified in writing;
3. that the Operations and Estates Officer does further research into the cost of hard standing bases at Lakeside and West Witney Allotments and this is brought back to a future meeting.

H164 WINDRUSH CEMETERY RISK ASSESSMENTS & CAPACITY

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. The Council had been expecting high numbers of burials due to the pandemic and although numbers had spiked initially, they had dropped to a normal level again. The Environment Agency permitted 50 burials per year and there was a requirement for a groundwater risk assessment. This had been done alongside a pandemic risk assessment which the Council should also have had. The results had shown that the Windrush Cemetery could have 100 burials per year without causing any adverse effects. 150 burials per year might also be possible and the cemetery had been approved as suitable for a pandemic burial site if needed in future. There was still some work to be done on a procedural level.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

H165 ST MARY'S CLOSED CHURCH YARD - CEDAR OF LEBANON TREE BAT SURVEY

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. As the subject had been discussed earlier, there was no further debate.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

H166 PUBLIC HALLS - COVID 19 LOCKDOWN

The Committee received and considered the report of the Office Manager. The report was for information and an update on how much income the public halls had lost due to lockdown. A member asked if the drop in income would affect the budget for the Corn Exchange upgrade. The Office Manager advised that it would not as the majority of the money was from Section 106 contributions.

Another member asked how the loss would be made up, the Town Clerk having confirmed that the income would have been spent on running costs. The Town Clerk would revise the budget later in the year to reflect the pandemic's impact.

The Chair of the Corn exchange Working Party gave an update on the meeting held earlier that evening. He updated on the 1863 bar, retractable seating and bench seating. The Working Party had also discussed furniture for the bar/café. There would also be a new logo.

A member asked about opening times. The Venue Manager advised that he envisaged Monday – Saturday, 10am – 3pm. The bar would be a bonus for use in the evening for hirers or in-house events.

A member thanked the Venue Manager for welcoming the Community Fridge into the Corn Exchange and another member thanked Officers for the use of Burwell Hall by the Land Army early in the lockdown.

The Office Manager advised that the halls would not be open from 4 July as Officers were still working to achieve government guidelines.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the verbal update from the Corn Exchange Working Party meeting held prior to this meeting be noted and the recommendations contained therein be agreed.

The meeting closed at: 6.56 pm

Chair