

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

Held on Monday, 7 September 2020

At 5.00 pm in the VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM – Virtual Meeting

Present:

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	L Ashbourne	L Duncan
Officers:	Sharon Groth John Hickman Tomas Smith Nicky Cayley	Town Clerk Operations and Estates Officer Venue Manager Democratic Services Officer
Others:	No members of the public.	

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for their absences were received from Cllrs Aitman and Harvey.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 JUNE 2020

The Working Party received and considered the minute of the meeting held on 29 June 2020.

RECOMMENDED: that the minutes of the Corn Exchange Working Party held on 29 June 2020 are an accurate account and should be signed by the Chair.

There were no matters arising.

4. 1863 CAFÉ/BAR

Members received and considered the report of the Venue Manager, which provided an update on the newly installed bar area.

A pavement licence had been applied for but currently could not be utilised as it was not yet safe to open the bar to the wider public due to Covid-19. Members felt strongly that this should be utilised when it was safe to do so.

Officers advised that there could be storage issues and members wondered if the small kitchen might provide some storage. Officers pointed out that this was already full of

stock for the bar – and the current stock was at a minimum level. Members asked if it would be possible to speak to WODC about putting a storage unit adjacent to the side of the Corn Exchange again.

In terms of storing additional furniture at the back of the building, the Operations and Estates Officer felt that it would be a lot of work for the caretakers and may even damage the back area of the building.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the 1863 Café/Bar should utilise the agreed Pavement License to trade on Market Square at an unspecified date in the future subject to Officers being satisfied with meeting the obligations of the license and COVID-19 safety;
3. to purchase 6 tables as specified in the report in grey and to ask WODC if alternative chairs would be acceptable as it had indicated that it wished all furniture in Market Square to be uniform;
4. that this be funded from the Rolling Capital Fund.

5. FURTHER CORN EXCHANGE REFURBISHMENT

The Working Party received and considered the report of the Venue Manager on further options for developing the Corn Exchange. Officers had researched the cost of a sprung floor and in light of this, members agreed that it would not be of benefit to enough customers to warrant this level of expenditure.

The Working Party was keen to progress the retractable seating and put this out to tender, in line with the Council's Financial Regulations. The Venue Manager would re-engage with Oxford Arts Consultants for assistance in writing a specification and also for their wider views on the venue. It was not felt that visits to other venues were necessary at this time, as the Corn Exchange should be developed along tailor made lines, rather than copying other venues.

Members noted that the installation of seating would be an issue for access from the large kitchen and therefore it was requested that a quote for a serving hatch be sought.

At this point it was decided to return to the issue of the Green Rooms at a later date.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the retractable seating should be put out to tender – for individual seats and not benches – and this should include provision of a vomitorium; the Venue Manager would write a specification assisted by Oxford Arts Consultants;
3. that costs associated with putting in a serving hatch would be explored;
4. that a sprung floor would not be installed;

5. that the Working Party looks at the Green Rooms at a later date.

6. FINANCIAL UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the financial balance sheet for the Corn Exchange Phase 2 refurbishment from the Office Manager. It was agreed that the Venue Manager and Officer Manager should put forward an application for the West Oxfordshire District Council's Community Facilities Grant. Both Officers were currently on leave, returning on 14 September, which was the deadline for submission, and the Working Party acknowledged that therefore this may not be possible.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that Officers apply for the West Oxfordshire District Council's Community Facilities Grant on 14 September – the closing date. If this was not possible this could be done in the next round of funding.

The meeting closed at: 6 pm

Chair