

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

Held on Tuesday, 1 June 2021

At 5.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	L Ashbourne J Aitman L Duncan	A D Harvey J King
Officers:	Nicky Cayley Adam Clapton Simon Wright Tomas Smith	Project Officer Deputy Town Clerk Democratic & Legal Services Officer Venue & Events Officer
Others:	No members of the public.	

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Nominations were sought for the position of Chair of the Corn Exchange Working Party. It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Owen Collins be elected.

There being no other nominations it was:

Resolved:

That, Councillor Owen Collins be elected Chair of the Working Party for the 2021/2022 municipal year.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

4 MINUTES

In response to a query it was clarified that capacity for the main hall was set at 166, including performers.

It was further advised that the consultation process in respect of options for the refurbishment would be discussed during the meeting.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Corn Exchange Working Party held on 1 March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

6 **CORN EXCHANGE PHASE TWO REFURBISHMENT**

In introducing the report the Chair advised the Working Party that Andrew Stone (Drama by Design) who had prepared the proposal was present to answer member questions. In addition Terry Powell who had been involved in the project was also present.

Some members expressed disappointment that members had not been aware before the meeting that Drama by Design would be represented at the meeting. It was also suggested that the documents were difficult to read online and hard copies would be beneficial. It was agreed that these could be provided on request.

It was suggested that the report be considered as tabled and the Working Party could then determine the decision making process and timing of those decisions accordingly.

In response to a query it was clarified that the refurbishment of the changing areas would be part of Phase 3 and was not for consideration at this stage.

The Project Officer introduced the report and sought members' views regarding the extent of consultation in respect of the proposals. It was suggested and agreed that any consultation be undertaken with the users previously identified.

The Working Party then gave detailed consideration to the document that had been submitted by Drama by Design. Issues discussed/clarified included:

- Confirmation that the budget proposed was adequate to deliver the works/equipment identified in the report.
- That the budget included training for staff on the operation of the system and that more than one person should be trained.
- That the current projection room would be suitable for housing the equipment but would be a bit cramped with sound equipment there as well.
- Additional lighting could be added as needed with extra sockets being available.
- The additional cost/requirements for providing the necessary infrastructure for cinema events. Whilst the current proposal was suitable for broadcasting of live events it would not be applicable for showing films.
- The necessary structural requirements for the lights and curtain mechanism.
- Options for seating, impact on the available space in the hall and the possibility of additional seating being provided.
- Confirmation that the Community Facilities Grant required that development commences by September 2021 although the District Council could be approached about an extension if necessary.

After further discussion it was agreed that the works could be two separate tenders. The Working Party expressed support for the tender process for the Audio Visual and lighting equipment could be commenced subject to a satisfactory roof structural report being received.

In respect of the preferred seating option it was agreed that a consultation meeting be arranged with user representatives and the outcome be fed back to members a future meeting of the Working Party.

Recommended:

1. That, subject to a satisfactory report from the structural engineer concerning the roof, the tender process in respect of the audio visual equipment and lighting be commenced;
2. That, the relevant stakeholders be consulted in respect of options for seating to help inform the tender process; and
3. That, an additional meeting of the Working Party be held to make recommendations to the Council meeting on 28 June 2021.

7 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS & PUBLIC**

Resolved:

That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted.

8 **PUBLIC HALL & 1863 CAFÉ BAR OPERATIONS**

Consideration was given to the report of the Venue & Events Officer outlining the current trading position of the Café Bar, opening hours and seeking recommendations on staffing.

Recommended:

1. That, the closure of the Café/Bar on a Saturday, except when there are events at the Corn Exchange, until the staffing situation has been clarified be supported;
2. That, the opening of the Café/Bar on a Monday to Friday be approved and reviewed as necessary; and
3. That, the Personnel Sub-Committee be recommended to support the appointment of additional staff for the Café/Bar.

The meeting closed at: 6.56 pm

Chair