

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

Held on Monday, 24 May 2021

At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor M Jones (Chair)

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| Councillors: | J Aitman | L Duncan |
| | L Ashbourne | R Smith |
| | T Ashby | V Gwatkin |
| Officers: | Adam Clapton | Deputy Town Clerk |
| | Sharon Groth | Town Clerk |
| | Simon Wright | Democratic & Legal Services Officer |
| Others: | 1 member of the public. | |

As there was no legislation in place for the Town Council to hold virtual meetings, and because of the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic, the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee formed virtually as an Advisory Committee. Any recommendations outside of the current work's programme, budget or policy would require ratification at the Full Council meeting held on 28th June 2021.

H263 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Owen Collins

H264 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared at the meeting.

H265 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

The Chair sought nominations for the position of Vice-Chair for the municipal year.

Resolved:

That, Councillor Vicky Gwatkin be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2021/2022 municipal year.

H266 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 March 2021 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee held on 8 March 2021 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

H267 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned for this item.

Mr Hopkins addressed the Committee in respect of a memorial gate at Windrush Cemetery.

The Committee reconvened following public participation.

H268 **PUBLIC HALLS UPDATE**

The Deputy Town Clerk gave a verbal update and reported that the bar had reopened at the Corn Exchange and, mainly due to the weather, takings had been variable. The Corn Exchange Working Party, at its forthcoming meeting, would be considering future staffing at the venue.

In addition, the Working Party would be looking at the next phase of the redevelopment and making recommendations to Council in due course.

It was reported that bookings at the council venues were gradually increasing but it was requested that delegation be given to allow officers to negotiate appropriate discounts to encourage bookings of the facilities, particularly bar driven functions. The Committee agreed to this and expressed their thanks to officers who had been involved in getting the venues operating again.

Resolved:

That, delegation be given to officers to negotiate discounts, as appropriate, to encourage bookings at The Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall over the next three months.

H269 **CEMETERIES UPDATE**

The Committee considered the report of the Compliance, External Contracts & Cemeteries Officer updating on a number of cemetery matters.

The Chair gave her condolences to Mr Hopkins, who had spoken in the public participation, and his family and members associated themselves with the Chair's comments. The Committee considered the installation of a memorial gate and sought clarification of the cost, proposed materials and the council's own regulations. Discussion ensued on alternative options and locations for a memorial and potential ongoing costs, such as maintenance.

The Committee expressed support for a memorial of some kind but agreed that further information was required before a decision could be made. It was proposed and agreed that the matter be deferred to allow outstanding issues to be clarified.

A summary of the responses to a consultation regarding an additional access at Tower Hill Cemetery was considered. It was noted that there were differing views and the committee

highlighted accessibility of the site as a priority and the issue of crime prevention and safety was considered.

After further discussion it was agreed that the responses needed further analysis and other issues clarified before a decision could be made. It was proposed and agreed that the matter be delegated and a small group of members be appointed to look at the outstanding issues.

As a result of the decision to further consider the access it was agreed to defer consideration of the appointment of a contractor for any associated works.

Resolved:

1. That, a decision on the installation of a memorial gate at Windrush Cemetery be deferred to the next meeting to allow the following to be clarified:

The cost of procuring a memorial gate at Windrush Cemetery and ongoing maintenance costs;

Officers looking at alternative options for a memorial such as a bench at other areas under the Town Councils control: and

Consultation being undertaken with the Friends of Windrush Cemetery about the introduction of a new gate.

2. That, delegation be given to the Deputy Town Clerk, in conjunction with a member task and finish group to fully analyse the responses to the consultation in respect of an additional access at Tower Hill Cemetery and make recommendations.

That, Cllrs Joy Aitman, Thomas Ashby and Mel Jones be appointed to serve on the task and finish group.

3. That, consideration of the selection of contractors for footpath and wall works be deferred in light of the decision at 2. above.

H270 **ALLOTMENTS UPDATE**

The Committee received the report of the Operations & Estates Advisor updating on issues with the allotments owned by the Council.

The Deputy Town Clerk gave a verbal update on the fencing for Hailey Road Allotments and reported that further quote had been received from a contractor together with an 'in house' bid. The Committee considered the bids and were of the opinion that further clarification was needed on the content of the submissions to ensure that value for money was met and that timescales could be adhered to. It was proposed and agreed that the matter be delegated to the Town Clerk to award the contract subject to clarification of the content of the bids.

The Committee considered issues with flooding at the Lakeside allotments and the request to carry out a survey to establish works that may be needed. It was indicated that the topographical information would be important when considering if any works would be feasible. It was agreed that the survey should be undertaken.

Resolved:

1. That, a topographical survey around Lakeside allotments to determine the extent of a bund required to prevent flooding to the allotments be approved at the cost identified in the report; and
2. That, a decision on the boundary fencing works at Hailey Road allotments be delegated to the Town Clerk to approve a contractor subject to clarification of the 'in house' bid.

The meeting closed at: 6.55 pm

Chair