

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

Held on Monday, 17 January 2022

At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor M Jones (Chair)

Councillors:	V Gwatkin	O Collins
	J Aitman	L Duncan
	T Ashby	R Smith
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Simon Wright	Democratic & Legal Services Officer
Others:	No members 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 programme, budget or policy would require ratification at the Full Council meeting held on 14 February 2022.

H21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ashbourne

H22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

H23 MINUTES

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

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that a response was yet to be received from Building Control regarding the new seating in the Corn Exchange. Once confirmation was received then the project could proceed but there was a likely lead time of 12 weeks.

Resolved:

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

H24 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

H25 **PUBLIC HALLS USAGE REPORT**

The report of the Venue & Events Officer was considered.

Members noted the progress to date and it was anticipated that hall usage and income from the Café Bar would increase as restrictions eased and weather improved.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that a request had been received from the organisers of the Tea Dance for a change in the way it operated. This would entail the withdrawal of an entrance fee for attendees. It was clarified that it was Town Council event and tea/coffee was provided with the organiser being paid through the payroll system for providing the music. It was noted that other tea dance events in Oxfordshire charged amounts above the current level for the Corn Exchange.

After discussion it was agreed that the present system should be retained with an entrance fee of £2.50 being charged.

Recommended:

That, the current arrangements for the Tea Dance at the Corn Exchange be continued with an entrance fee of £2.50 being charged.

H26 **CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN**

The report of the Project Officer was considered.

The Committee supported the principle of providing an area for a children's memorial garden and the potential location, design of the site and infrastructure required were discussed.

After discussion it was agreed that the garden be located at Windrush Cemetery with exact siting to be agreed. Members indicated that the garden should be relatively small, include benches for people to sit and reflect, have a willow arch entrance if possible and a planted area. It was agreed that this should be a Town Council project.

Recommended:

1. That, the provision of a Children's Memorial Garden at Windrush Cemetery be supported; and
2. That, officers be requested to develop the scheme on the basis outlined at the meeting.

H27 **FINANCE/BUDGET REPORT**

The committee considered the report of the Town Clerk updating on the budget decision taken by Council and seeking consideration of the budgets allocated to the committee.

In response to questions it was clarified that the building surveys, CCTV and energy surveys were allocated as earmarked reserves.

In respect of Windrush Cemetery it was asked if the £25k allocation was needed or could be reduced. In response it was explained that this was for the road infrastructure for the future development of the site. After discussion it was considered that costs for this could be significant in the future so it was sensible to allocate the funding as proposed.

Clarification was given that the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee would consider recommendations from the other committees when making a final decision on refining the budget. It was emphasised that committees needed to look at their budgets in isolation.

Discussion ensued regarding the potential for increased income from the Corn Exchange and it was noted that this could not be guaranteed and it was preferable to look at revenue savings instead. Different operating models were discussed and clarification was given that the Corn Exchange Working Party had looked at the business model and this would continue to be reviewed.

It was agreed that, at this stage, there did not appear to be any areas within the committees remit where further savings could be made and therefore it was not possible to make any such recommendation.

Recommended:

That, the current budget position be noted.

The meeting closed at: 7.15 pm

Chair