

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 4 July 2022
Title: Public Halls Report
Contact Officer: Venue & Events Officer - Tomas Smith

Background

The Corn Exchange, 1863 and Burwell Hall continue to open to the public with groups having a few weeks left up until their summer breaks.

Current Situation

The Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall continue to be busy, and all groups have now returned who were going to after the Pandemic. The Council has employed a Venue and Events Assistant who is already looking to promote the Corn Exchange heavily on social media, as well as providing day to day support to the Venue and Events Officer. Having the extra support will allow the Venue and Events Officer to concentrate on bringing more Events to the Corn Exchange, Burwell Hall and to the wider Witney area.

Caretakers remain the same with two members of staff working up to 30 hours a week between them, and there is one full time cleaner.

1863

1863 is now open six days a week between 09:00 -18:00. Fridays run the Fizzy Friday Offer so the café can open until 22:00 at the discretion of the Venue and Events Officer. The café is getting busier, and the footfall is increasing weekly, having the offer of paninis has resulted in greater customer retention between 12:00 – 14:00 and daily sales have increased steadily in line with this. Feedback has been positive with the café having a dedicated regular following and regular customers using the facility. Fizzy Friday is becoming more popular, and the advertising of this offer will increase more that the Venue and Events Assistant is in place. There are more casual staff in place who assist when required and allow for more flexibility on the rotas in case there are events on which require staffing.

The income/expenditure for the bar from 1st April – 20th June 2022 can be seen below:

Income

Daytime Café takings £12,379.20 (net)

Evening Café takings (including Burwell Hall Bar) £4,518.65 (net) from 7 openings

£16,897.85

Expenditure

Supply Costs £7,111.68 (net)

Equipment Costs £674.31 (net)

Newspaper Sub Costs £ 100 approx.

Staffing Costs (inc. NI) £13,818.00 (inc. 25% cost of Venue & Events Officer Salary)

£21,703.99

Corn Exchange

The Corn Exchange usage has increased after the pandemic but is still lower than would be desirable running at roughly 45% occupancy during the term time weeks. This will increase when all the works on the building are completed which will then be showcased at a Gala Opening Night, an event to showcase all the Corn Exchange has to offer due to the new lighting, sound, and seating. Currently this has been postponed due to the delay in getting the retractable seating installed. As soon as this date is confirmed the Opening Event will be re-organised and a concerted advertising effort put into place. This will involve a Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter campaign as well as a dedicated page on the website to promote the event.

Burwell Hall

Burwell Hall continues to be busy with the hall being used every day during the week and most weekends there are children's birthday parties. Usage is currently roughly 50%, this can improve, however the current turnaround time works well with the cleaner we have during the week and the current caretaking situation.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Financial implications

Described here or as stated in the report above.

- Continued opening of 1863
- Closure of Main Hall when the seating is installed

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report.