

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

Held on Monday, 4 July 2022

At 6.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor M Jones (Chair)

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| Councillors: | D Enright T Ashby D Butterfield | L Duncan V Gwatkin P Hiles |
| Officers: | Adam Clapton Derek Mackenzie Angus Whitburn David Zimmer | Deputy Town Clerk Halls & Green Spaces Administrator Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer Head of Operations |
| Others: | None | |

H342 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor O Collins.

H343 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

H344 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 23 May 2022 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee held on 23 May 2022 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

H345 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

H346 FINANCE REPORT

The Committee received and considered the financial report showing figures for items under its remit for the last Quarter, provided by the Town Clerk & Chief Executive Officer.

Resolved:

That, the current financial position be noted.

H347 **PUBLIC HALLS REPORT**

The committee received and considered the report of the Venue & Events Officer.

Members noted the current position and heard that Café 1863 had made a small loss during the previous two months. The Venue & Events Officer had assured the committee that future large events in both the Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall would help towards establishing a profit in the coming months.

Resolved:

That, the report of the Venue & Events Officer be noted.

H348 **BURWELL HALL - HEATING SYSTEM**

The Committee received the report of the Project Officer concerning case studies for Fuel CHP boilers at Burwell Hall.

In response to a representation from another Member the committee discussed the merits of Fuel CHP heating system. The committee had previously resolved to proceed with this new and untested technology at its meeting on 23 May 2022.

Although there were some reservations members agreed that the decision should not be altered due to the significantly higher cost of alternative solutions. To delay could impede the Burwell Hall changing rooms project and suggested funding support from the Government decarbonisation scheme was not guaranteed.

Resolved:

1. That, the documents, and links provided be noted and,
2. That, the council progressing with the installation of Fuel CHP boiler at Burwell Hall.

H349 **ILLUMINATION OF CORN EXCHANGE & FLAG FLYING**

The committee received and considered the report of Deputy Town Clerk.

Members asked for clarification from the Deputy Town Clerk as to which days were to be affected by the change to flag flying. It was confirmed that the new policy only affected the extended royal family birthdays and that such days as Remembrance Day and the opening of parliament would still be included.

With regards to illumination of the Corn Exchange, the committee agreed that any requests must be from a Witney resident or organisation based in Witney. Any further requests would be forwarded to the Leader and Mayor per the policy for agreement to proceed.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,

2. That, the Union flag flying days as notified by the Government be noted and,
3. That, requests to illuminate the Corn Exchange must be made a Witney resident or organisation based in Witney.

H350 CORN EXCHANGE REFURBISHMENT

The committee received a verbal update from the Deputy Town Clerk on the refurbishment of the Corn Exchange.

Members were advised that process had stalled however the Project Officer was in active discussion with the structural engineers and other associated parties.

Resolved:

That, the verbal update be noted.

H351 CEMETERY REGULATIONS

The committee received a report from the Maintenance & Environmental Officer in respect of the new draft cemetery regulations document.

Members were assured that the main reason for the draft was to update the previous document which was produced in 2011 and to formalise procedures that have changed since that time.

The main points and changes were outlined, and the Committee welcomed the introduction of a simpler and cheaper proposal for burials in the Woodland section, as well as a cheaper alternative for families to use wooden crosses in place of more costly stone memorials.

There was discussion on the introduction of Kerbing sets, and it was advised their introduction would result in additional grounds maintenance work in terms of labour and cost. There was agreement the increased cost would have to be borne by all cemetery users which they believed would be unfair.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Cemetery Regulations be amended and presented to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee for adoption and,
3. That, officers review new burial charges and,
4. That, kerb sets on grave spaces is not introduced into the cemeteries and,
5. That, weekend burials are only to be allowed in exceptional circumstances and should be charged to cover the cost to the Council.

H352 CEMETERY OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2022

The committee received a verbal update from the Deputy Town Clerk regarding entry into Cemetery of the Year Awards 2022.

Members were supportive of entering the competition as they felt it would help improve and promote the appearance of the cemeteries within Witney and offer advice to inform its future management. Entry would also support the Witney in Bloom entry of which the Town Council were already regular entrants.

It was confirmed by the Deputy Town Clerk that funds of £310 were available from existing budget to sign up to the ICCM charter of bereaved, a potential condition of entering the competition.

Resolved:

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the Town Council proceeds with entry into the Cemetery of the Year Awards 2022.

H353 **ALLOTMENTS - WAITING LIST**

The committee received a report from the Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer concerning the Allotment waiting list.

The committee heard that the Witney Allotment Association (WAA) had over 200 names on the waiting list and had sought the Town Councils advice on whether to close the waiting list for a period of time.

Though members understood the request of WAA they felt that the closure of the waiting list would lead to disappointment by residents as there would be no hope of being allocated an allotment in the future. The consequence would likely be a negative towards the Council and would invoke further administrative enquiries, which was why the allotments had been previously outsourced.

Members felt that residents already on the waiting list were not being updated on the progress of their applications and so it was thought that this should be discussed with WAA to improve this communication with residents.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Town Council request WAA to continue to add residents to the allotment waiting list and ,
3. That, WAA communicate with residents on the list on an annual basis to update on the progress of their application and if they want to remain on the list.

The meeting closed at: 6.50 pm

Chair