

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

Held on Monday, 26 September 2022

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

Present:

Councillor V Gwatkin (Chair)

Councillors:	T Ashby	L Duncan
	D Butterfield	P Hiles
	O Collins	J Aitman
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	None.	

H454 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Jones and D Enright.

H455 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

H456 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 4 July 2022 were received.

P350 – The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that, following satisfactory additional core samples being taken, the retractable seating installation at the Corn Exchange would take place in December.

P352 – The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed the Council had entered Windrush Cemetery into The Cemetery of the Year award competition. An impressive score had been attained but the Council had not been successful in obtaining an award. Further feedback would be available in November.

H353 – A member advised the Witney Allotment Association had been in contact with those on the waiting but it appeared there had been little reduction on the numbers so far.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments committee held 4 July 2022 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the chair.

H457 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

H458 **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.

Members also considered capital and special revenue projects for the 2023-24 Budget. The committee asked that funds for a projector, capable of screening national arts events and allowing for better scenery backdrops in the Corn Exchange be added to the budget along with the refurbishment of the blue plaque on its exterior.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and current financial position be noted and,
2. That, funds for a projector and renovating the Blue Badge be added to the Budget for 2023-24

H459 **PUBLIC HALLS REPORT**

The committee received and considered the report of the Venue & Events Officer and hall usage figures of the Bookings Administrator.

Members considered the introduction of a scheme to allow local artists to display their work in the Corn Exchange. It was felt that this is a positive idea and was in keeping with the recent introduction of allowing local charity and volunteer groups to display in the window of the Town Hall Administration office.

A fee to display or commission of any sales is deemed not necessary. The committee would like those that wish to display to be limited to a few weeks to allow for Witney Town Council to advertise these limited exhibitions.

An agreement would need to be drawn up for the artist to sign to negate the Council's liability the security of the artwork in a public facility could not be guaranteed.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and usage figures be noted and,
2. That, The Venue & Events Officer arranges a bookable calendar of exhibitions by local artists and,
3. That, an agreement is created to be signed by artist to confirm they accept liability for their artwork being displayed at the facility.

H460 **CORN EXCHANGE TICKETING SYSTEM**

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

Members were in agreement that such a system would be required once seating was installed and were satisfied it would incur a minimal administration cost only. They welcomed the ability for customers at events in the Corn Exchange to choose seats once that function could be added by officers.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Eventbrite ticketing system is introduced with immediate effect.

H461 **CAR PARKING FOR THE CORN EXCHANGE**

The committee received a verbal report for the Deputy Town Clerk following a request from a local gardening group to remove the three parking spaces located at the side of the Corn Exchange.

Members discussed the merits and disadvantages of the proposal but agreed that for the Corn Exchange to remain an operational community arts facility, the parking spaces would need to remain the inclusion of signs confirming the spaces were for Corn Exchange use only could be considered.

Resolved:

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the parking spaces remain ancillary to the Corn Exchange for use by hall hirers and its vehicles when necessary.
3. That, the offer of relocation of the group's area to The Leys remained and,
4. That, correspondence is issued to the gardening group explaining this decision and the mitigations it has put in place to address its concerns.

H462 **CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN**

The report of the Project Officer was received and considered.

The committee welcomed a suggestion the memorial could be located in part of Windrush Cemetery which was not useable for burials and were supportive of engraved stones bearing children's names, hoping the latter would not be interfered with.

There also agreed that consultation with the Ranger on the biodiversity aspect would be beneficial and a planted memorial archway was mooted if possible.

Members did however, have concerns about the creation of a pond and on its condition It had the potential to look stagnant after a short period of time from the falling of leaves from the trees and to overflow and run off onto the surrounding ground. The pond also posed a health and safety risk for families visiting the cemetery.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the suggestion of a pond is not progressed and,
3. That, officers investigate the idea of a memorial archway and engraved stones at the

identified site.

The meeting closed at: 6.25 pm

Chair