

PUBLIC HALLS COMMITTEE OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 16 July 2012

at 6pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Witney

Present

Councillor: T J Morris (Chairman)

Councillors: P J Dorward D A Snow
 H B Eaglestone C K Woodward

Officers: Deputy Town Clerk Democratic Services Officer

Also present: 1 member of the press

H326 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for their absence were received from Councillors Mrs J C Baker and D S Enright.

H327 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made in matters to be considered at the meeting.

H328 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the following meetings be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman:

Ordinary meeting of 28 May 2012
Special meeting of 18 June 2012

H329 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

In response to a question, the Deputy Town Clerk gave an update on the Corn Exchange market research which had recently been completed. She advised that it was too early to give the results; however, she hoped to have the preliminary report by 30 July with a full report to the next meeting of the Public Halls Committee in September.

H330 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public present.

H331 **COMMITTEE VISION**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk, as circulated with the agenda.

With regard to Madley Park Hall, the Deputy Town Clerk reported that the snagging would be completed by 30 August 2012. Following which she would be looking over the building with the surveyor and ensuring that the Trustees are happy before meeting with them on 3 September to discuss the lease.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the report be noted.
- 2) that the Deputy Town Clerk notifies Councillors Morris, Woodward and Snow of the date of the meeting with the surveyor to enable them to attend.

H332 **PUBLIC HALLS OPERATIONAL REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk, as circulated with the agenda.

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the franchising of the bar operation had worked well and the contract had been extended for a further 12 months.

The Deputy Town Clerk commented that once the Langdale Hall external decoration was complete, she intended to produce new brochures promoting the hall to various markets. The hall had also undergone a fire risk assessment and, subject to the erection of a couple of signs, there were no problems. She confirmed that the noticeboard close to the Woolgate was updated twice weekly and that the Langdale Hall would have a Facebook page soon.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that she was working closely with Abingdon-Witney College to explore their potential use of the hall and that the theatre groups were returning, with three pantomimes already booked. In answer to a question, the Deputy Town Clerk explained the problems experienced in the Langdale Hall car park and the reasons for changes. With regard to the Corn Exchange, she hoped that the scaffolding would be removed soon. A Member urged that momentum was not lost.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

H333 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: that the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting in accordance with Section 1 of the Local Government Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

H334 **LANGDALE HALL**

The Committee received and considered the agent's report, as circulated with the agenda.

Members considered the difficulties with regard to the Langdale Hall and whether two halls were needed in the town centre. The Deputy Town Clerk cautioned that following the Corn Exchange market research it was clear that residents did not wish to see a high levy on their Council tax to cover costs for the public halls.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the report be noted.
- 2) that in the light of the freehold/leasehold expectations, the Council's policy to dispose of the Langdale Hall, in order to fund the development of the Corn Exchange, is not pursued.
- 3) that the Langdale Hall be retained subject to an assessment on its future once the Corn Exchange has been reopened.
- 4) that the above recommendation be included in the Committee Vision at minute H331.

N.B. These recommendations were not ratified at the Council meeting held on 6 August 2012 being referred to a Special meeting - date to be arranged.

The meeting closed at 7pm

Chairman