

PUBLIC HALLS COMMITTEE OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

**Held on Monday 21 January 2013
at 6pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Witney**

Present

Councillor: Mrs J C Baker (Chairman)

Councillors:	R F N Curry (substitute for T J Morris)	D S Enright
	P J Dorward	D A Snow
	H B Eaglestone	C K Woodward
Non Committee Member:		J S King
Officers:	Town Clerk	Facilities Manager
	Democratic Services Officer	Deputy Town Clerk
Also present:	2 Members of the public	

H025 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for his absence was received from Councillor T J Morris.

H026 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest in matters to be considered at the meeting.

H027 **MINUTES**

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

Ordinary meeting held on 12 November 2012

Special meeting held on 17 December 2012.

H028 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Minute H482 (12 November 2012) – Committee Vision - The Chairman advised that under Recommendation (2) the Advisory Board would initially include the Town Clerk, with the Facilities Manager taking over the officer involvement when appropriate.

Minute H487 (12 November 2012) – Corn Exchange Tender Process – The Chairman advised that the Facilities Manager would update the Committee on progress at the end of this meeting under exclusion of press & public as this remained confidential information.

Minute H529 (17 December 2012) – Corn Exchange – To Formulate and Agree a Vision – In answer to a question, the Town Clerk confirmed that the terms of reference had not yet been circulated.

H029 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The members of the public present did not wish to speak.

H030 **PUBLIC HALLS OPERATIONAL REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Facilities Manager, as circulated with the agenda.

The Facilities Manager circulated a copy of the correspondence sent to the architects. She also confirmed that the legionella compliance works had now been completed.

With regard to halls bookings, the Facilities Manager remarked that the car boot sales had proved successful and from March would be run by one of the traders, subject to agreed charges and conditions. Her report also contained details of other forward bookings, including a regular booking for a Monday evening.

A Member congratulated the Facilities Manager on her efforts to promote the halls and hoped that more trade would be gained through the increased usage and footfall.

The Committee considered the suggestion to install energy saving motion sensors in Langdale Hall, Burwell Hall and the Town Hall. Members were concerned that these sensors did not always work and could be problematic if they went wrong.

The Committee considered the accounts for the Madley Park Hall Trust (to May 2012) and were pleased to note that the hall was running at a small profit.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the report be noted.
- 2) that, subject to the ability of the booking system, the Facilities Officer reports to each meeting of this Committee with regard to the public halls bookings.
- 3) that energy saving lighting (with motion sensors) be installed in the Town Hall in the first instance.

H031 FINANCIAL REPORT

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

The Town Clerk introduced Miss Nicky Clargo, the new Deputy Town Clerk/RFO.

The Town Clerk remarked that she had included both sets of figures in one report. She had been working on the budget during the day and any changes would be included in the budget presented to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

In answer to a Member's question, the Facilities Manager confirmed that the drinks machine had not been used as much as predicted. She was looking at ways of increasing usage.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

H032 CORN EXCHANGE/OXFORD INSPIRES

The Chairman and Cllr R Curry gave a verbal report on their progress with Oxford Inspires. They were currently working on a feasibility study for presentation to the committee, in the near future, for observations. They remarked that they were ensuring all the questions were answered and were also being mindful of certain areas, e.g. conservation. They were moving forward in a staged way.

Cllr Curry confirmed that the intention was to include all sorts of information on customers, opportunities and facilities in order to ensure that the Corn Exchange would be a useful building and used by the community. Once the Town Council had the feasibility study it would be able to make a decision on what it wanted to see in the hall – the vision – and instruct the architects. Decisions need to be based on factual evidence. It was confirmed that Oxford Inspires would be pleased to attend the next committee meeting on 11 March 2013.

A Member agreed that Oxford Inspires sounded experienced with arts and theatre centres and endorsed the fact that questions should also be asked about community use and they should also be given as much information on prior use as possible. It was confirmed that they had already had this information and they fully understood the past usage by community groups and were also looking at usage by young people.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the verbal report be noted.
- 2) that the report from Oxford Inspires to a future committee meeting contains information on costs.

H033 **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.

H034 **CORN EXCHANGE – TENDER PROCESS**

The Facilities Manager re-circulated the information on the tender process and the final two architects. She confirmed that this included information on the on-going costs. The Town Clerk reminded Members that this information remained confidential.

It was agreed that there should be a Special meeting of the Public Halls Committee to consider the appointment of one of the architects, assuming that the committee feels obligated to do so at this time. It was crucial for the committee to know what costs would be incurred should they appoint an architect, as the payment of a retainer might be required. The Committee agreed that no money should be passed to the appointed architect until they started working with the Council and Oxford Inspires.

The Town Clerk remarked that advice should be sought on the legal issues and she would work with the Facilities Manager to ensure this was available for the special meeting.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the verbal report be noted.
- 2) that the Town Clerk seeks legal advice and ensures all information is available, together with clarification on the architects fees, prior to arranging a special meeting of the Public Halls Committee.

The meeting closed 6.40pm

Chairman