

PUBLIC HALLS COMMITTEE OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

**Held on Monday 3 June 2013
at 6pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Witney**

Present

Councillor: T J Morris (Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs J C Baker P J Dorward
 Mrs B J Churchill C Holliday (substitute for R F N Curry)
 D S Enright

Officers: Town Clerk Facilities Manager
 Democratic Services Officer Deputy Town Clerk

H229 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for their absence were received from Councillors R F N Curry, J S King and C K Woodward.

H230 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

H231 **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED: that Councillor Mrs J C Baker be appointed Vice Chairman of this Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

H232 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2013 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

H233 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Minute H116 – Madley Park Hall – Under recommendation (2) the Town Clerk confirmed that she would be arranging a meeting between one of the Trustees (Cllr R Curry), Cllr Morris and herself to progress the lease negotiations.

H234 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public present for this item.

H235 **PUBLIC HALLS OPERATIONAL REPORT**

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

The Facilities Manager highlighted the problems with BT following the move of the Bookings Office. The bookings were now be taken by the Admin Assistant in the Town Hall on a trial basis. The transfer of the telephone line had left Langdale Hall without a phone or broadband connection for over three weeks. She had opened a complaint process with BT and found their customer services very frustrating.

The Facilities Manager confirmed that there was positive feedback on the price reduction for the hire of Langdale Hall, with lots of smaller groups booking the evening sessions. This also confirmed that it was difficult to create a simple pricing structure as different groups had different requirements.

She had met with an inspector today to view Burwell floor. He appeared to consider that the problem was 50/50, the floor being soaked by the cleaners, combined with damp from underneath. This had not been evident on the conditional survey, however, he felt that the damp proof course could have failed. He agreed that it was the right floor and was fitted correctly, however, the cleaning could have aggravated the problem. Potentially, the floor would need to be re-screeded and re-laid

With regard to the provision of a smoking shelter at Burwell, the Facilities Manager confirmed that there was a bin provided, however smokers congregated in the entrance and did not use this, leaving unsightly cigarette stubs on the ground. She did not recommend a pole mounted bin as she considered this would be vandalised.

The report contained a request from Witney Town Band for use of the Langdale Hall on a Tuesday evening. The Facilities Manager confirmed that the hall was in use on this evening, however, the Band could be offered this space if it became available. The Committee agreed that they would like to support the band if possible.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the report be noted.
- 2) that the request from the Town Band be noted and that they be advised that as Tuesday evenings were unavailable, however they might be accommodated if they were able to change their rehearsal day.
- 3) that a smoking shelter is not provided at Burwell, and that the lettings contract incorporates a requirement for hirers to clear the outside of cigarette stubs at the end of their event.

(Councillor D S Enright entered the meeting at this point, being 6.20pm)

H236 **FINANCIAL REPORT**

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

There were no issues and Members congratulated the officers on good budget control

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

H237 **CORN EXCHANGE**

Councillor Mrs J C Baker gave a verbal report on progress.

She commented that the Advisory Board were in the process of drawing up a redevelopment brief in preparation for the meeting next week. They were in touch with CIAO who had developed a lottery awarded project in Witney. The first preliminary enquiry for Heritage Lottery Funding had been successfully sent off today and a response was expected within 10 days. This would indicate whether it was a suitable project for funding.

Following the Advisory Board meeting next week, she hoped to keep the momentum going by referring the brief to either a special Public Halls Committee meeting or Council.

The Town Clerk advised that there was no funding in the budget to progress the project and that the Town Council would need to demonstrate matched funding for grant applications. She commented that the

Council was holding £325,000 in earmarked reserved for the access road to Windrush Cemetery which, due to the scrapping of the Cogges Link Road was unlikely to be needed in the near future. She had sought advice from the solicitors, who had reviewed the original legal agreement and were satisfied that this money could be released as it only depended on the CLR being built. She had also been advised by Planning at WODC that the permission for the existing entrance was for a permanent entrance.

A Member agreed that the Council needed to progress the current projects and that the cemetery entrance could be looked at the appropriate time in the future. There was an agreement for potential Section 106 monies to be forthcoming, however, this would not be immediately available.

A Member enquired whether any of the information on the potential development could be made available to the public. It was agreed that parts of the feasibility study (next steps/summary and information on page 17) could be released.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the report be noted.
- 2) that £250,000 from the earmarked reserves for the Windrush Cemetery access be directed to the Corn Exchange project with the proviso that full provision for a new access be maintained when and if this becomes necessary.
- 3) that the Town Clerk considers what information can be released to the public and the Events & Communications Officer issues a press release based on this information.

H238 **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.

H239 **CORN EXCHANGE – ARCHITECTS LETTER – FORMAL RESPONSE**

The Committee received and considered the correspondence, as circulated with the agenda.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the correspondence be noted
- 2) that the Town Clerk seeks advice from the solicitors on an appropriate response.

The meeting closed at 7pm

Chairman