

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
PUBLIC HALLS COMMITTEE OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Wednesday 27 February 2013

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

Present

Councillor: T J Morris (Chairman)

Councillors:	Mrs J C Baker	D S Enright
	P J Dorward	D A Snow
	H B Eaglestone	

Non-Committee Members:		
	AK Beames	Mrs S Davies
	Mrs B J Churchill	J S King
	Ms Curry	B Woodruff

Officers:	Facilities Manager	Democratic Services Officer
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H088 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for their absence were received from Councillors R F N Curry, A D Harvey and C K Woodward.

H089 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

H090 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 44(B)

RESOLVED: that Standing Order 44(b) be suspended to allow all Councillors present to speak and vote on the following agenda items.

H091 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC – To consider and if appropriate, to pass the following resolution

That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted.

H092 CORN EXCHANGE TENDER

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

The Chairman thanked the Facilities Manager for putting the information together, which assist them in reaching a decision with regard to the tender process for the Corn Exchange. He remarked that it was important that a decision on the way forward was agreed at this meeting..

The Facilities Manager highlighted that her report contained details of the issues that needed to be resolved.

The Chairman commented that following the reinstatement of the Public Halls Committee, Members had been very keen to get things moving on the Corn Exchange and had acted on advice given, which may have been premature. The present situation was that there were two contenders and the Committee either needed to choose one, or agree to abandon the process.

A Member commented that they believed that the process should be halted at this stage and gave reasons for this decision. These were endorsed by other Members.

A Member remarked that a lot of work had been done, including work by Oxford Inspires, and therefore withdrawing from the process would not be "starting again", rather acting on subsequent advice, and information obtained from the public consultation.

The Committee was keen to look forward and work with Oxford Inspires, whose brief included a requirement to recommend architects, designers, grants, etc. at the appropriate time.

The Committee agreed that the two architects had put forward some very good designs for the Corn Exchange and that they should be thanked for their hard work. It was felt from the discussion that the project was changing and at this point it would not be advisable to commit to one architect. The Committee acknowledged that this was not a good situation for the Town Council to be in and that they should be mindful of the tender process when considering future projects.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the current tender process is abandoned and S J Treloar be requested to communicate this decision as soon as possible.
- 2) that for the next meeting of this Committee, the Facilities Manager drafts a statement regarding the reason for the above decision (1).
- 3) that once S J Treloar have completed the actions above (1), the Town Council has fulfilled its obligations to this company with regard to the Corn Exchange project.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm

Chairman