

ESTATES MANAGEMENT MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 15 May 2017

At 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor: P J Dorward (Chairman)

Councillors: C Brown D Temple
H B Eaglestone

Officers: Town Clerk Operations and Estates Officer
Democratic Services Officer Public Halls Officer
Responsible Financial Officer
Asst Ops & Estates Officer

Also present: 1 member of the public

E218 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for their absence were received from Cllrs Churchill, King, Morris and Woodward.

E219 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

E220 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: that Cllr C Brown be elected Vice Chairman for the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

E221 MINUTES

a) Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards Sub Committee – 1 March 2017

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2017 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman;

Public Halls Sub Committee – 6 March 2017

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2017 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman;

b) **MATTERS ARISING:** there were no matters arising from the Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards Minutes of 1 March 2017 and the Public Halls Sub Committee of 6 March 2017 to be discussed at the meeting.

E222 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The member of public present did not wish to address the Committee.

E223 **COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Town Clerk suggested that the Committee might prefer to consider this item at the end of the meeting ensuing discussions may give rise to further ideas on what the Committee wished to achieve during the year.

The Chairman and other members agreed this was a good idea.

RECOMMENDED: that this item be deferred to the end of the meeting.

E224 **OPERATIONAL REPORT – PROGRESS ON IMPROVEMENTS AND REPAIRS SINCE LAST MEETING**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer as circulated with the agenda. This highlighted the installation of CCTV in the Corn Exchange, anti-social behaviour at Burwell Hall, and roof repairs at West Witney Sports and Social Club.

In response to the vandalism of the Burwell Hall roof, which had cost approximately £125, a Member asked if defensive planting could be reintroduced to prevent young people climbing on the roof. The Operations and Estates Officer confirmed that anti-grip paint was already in use. Members had some concerns about defensive planting in case young children were injured by accident. It was agreed that the Operations and Estates Team would look into options.

It was reported that the car parking marking at West Witney Sports Ground would be re done and additional disabled spaces added. The bollards kept being pulled up to allow cars to be parked on the grass and these would be fixed more firmly.

The Cemeteries Officer and the new Foreman would soon be reviewing which stones at Tower Hill needed to be laid flat. After this had been completed, the team would move onto the Windrush Cemetery.

The Operations and Estates Officer reported that the annual Health and Safety Audit had been carried out and most of the required actions had been completed or would be completed within the required timescales.

A member referred to the CCTV in the Corn Exchange and asked if there was going to be a maintenance contract put in place. The Operations and Estates Officer advised that he had discussed this with the contractor who would provide a quote although he had indicated that it was not really worthwhile as all that would be needed was a regular lens cleaning programme. It would be better to just call out an engineer if needed.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;

2. that Officers look into options for defensive planting around Burwell Hall to deter youths climbing on the roof;
3. that car park marking at West Witney Sports Ground be carried out
4. that bollards at West Witney be re fixed
5. that the programme of laying stones flat in Tower Hill Cemetery be started.

E225 PUBLIC HALLS – OPERATIONS AND HALL USAGE REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Public Halls Officer as circulated with the agenda.

Members felt that figures were positive and the Public Halls Manager was of the opinion that things had improved since February. Small 2 hour bookings had increased and the team was slotting them into spaces between longer bookings.

The Chairman commented that the speaker system in the Corn Exchange was problematic as it did not distribute sound evenly and members agreed. He suggested the Halls Team should look into a satellite speaker system.

In response to a Members question on the floor maintenance, the Public Halls Officer confirmed there was a regime of weekly buffing and the floor was holding up well.

The Town Clerk pointed out that the new hall hire charges had been adopted in some haste particularly as the budget had been set before the hire charges had been altered, there could be a big impact. Subsequently a revised hire charge schedule had been drawn up which was tabled. This encouraged users to have longer periods of hire. Members agreed that the revised charges would help to cover overheads.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the revised hire charges be adopted;
3. that the Public Halls Officer investigates a satellite sound system and reports back to the next meeting.

E226 UPDATE ON THE GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer, providing an update on the current position with the grounds maintenance contract.

The Chairman asked about the parking problems on The Leys and the Town Clerk informed the Committee that the police had asked the highways to put in yellow lines or at least a single white line to help the issues. A report would go to the Sports and Recreation Committee the following week.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

E227 FINANCIAL REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the RFO as circulated with the agenda. In response to a Members question the Town Clerk confirmed that fees against Langdale Hall had been incurred by the aborted sale.

Members noted the increase in burials income.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

E228 CLOSED CHURCHYARDS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk as circulated prior to the meeting. There had been a request from Holy Trinity Church for the Town Council to remove some trees in the churchyard which they alleged were causing problems to the fabric of the church. However, the trees had TPOs on them and the Town Council could do nothing without the permission of the District Council's Tree Officer who had not looked at them yet. They had, however, been inspected during the Town Council's tree survey and no problems had been found with them. Any problems with the church building were wholly the responsibility of the church.

A member asked about the bollards in front of St. Mary's Church. The Operations and Estates Officer advised that the church had not found the bollards proposed by the Town Council acceptable. Furthermore, the pillars had been hit again and the Operations and Estates Officer had wanted to fence them off as in his opinion one was in danger of collapsing. The Church had been vehemently opposed to this and had not permitted it. Members were concerned by this and Officers suggested commissioning an urgent report from the Council's Health and Safety Advisor. Members felt that this was a sensible option.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that a report should be commissioned as matter of urgency by GH Safety on the safety of the church pillars at St. Mary's Church.

E229 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: 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.

E230 PROPERTY MATTERS (UPDATE ON LEGAL MATTERS & LEASE/AGREEMENTS)

The Town Clerk gave a verbal update on matters relating to the Langdale Hall, the Town Hall, 51 Market Square and play areas at Raleigh Crescent, Unterhaching Park and Cedar Drive and Park Tennis at The Leys.

RECOMMENDED: that the verbal update from the Town Clerk had been noted.

E231 **COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

Whilst items had been raised during the meeting, the Chairman said that he wished to have more time to consider this and he would consult with the other members of the Committee. He would feed this back at the next meeting.

RECOMMENDED: that the Committee Objectives and Work Programme be deferred to the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.35pm.

Chairman