

ESTATES MANAGEMENT MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 3 July 2017

At 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor: P J Dorward (Chairman)

Councillors:	A K Beames (sub C Brown)	J S King
	B J Churchill	T J Morris
	H B Eaglestone	D Temple
		C K Woodward
Officers:	Town Clerk	Asst Ops & Estates Officer
	Democratic Services Officer	Public Halls Officer
	Responsible Financial Officer	

Also present: 4 members of the public

E316 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for his absence was received from Cllr C Brown.

E317 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

E318 MINUTES

a) **RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2017 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman;

b) **MATTERS ARISING**

Minute E228 – The Chairman commented that a member of the public present had commented in a written statement handed to him that the trees in Holy Trinity Churchyard did not have TPOs on them although they would need permission for work as they were in a conservation area.

E319 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

E320 COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk, in which she had highlighted projects that the Committee might wish to consider and prioritise for the forthcoming year.

Cllr Morris entered at 6.05pm.

She informed members that she would be working with the Operations and Estates Officer to bring a more meaningful matrix to the Committee.

A member commented that she wanted to see the reintroduction of disabled parking at Langdale and Burwell Halls.

The Chairman felt that the Committee had a large remit. He personally wanted to see improved marketing of Council facilities including public halls.

Members felt that an aspirational approach should be taken for the rest of the year.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the work priorities for the forthcoming year include cemeteries, Langdale Hall, and the Corn Exchange.
3. that other projects be considered once the revised matrix was presented.

E321 OPERATIONAL REPORT – PROGRESS ON IMPORVEMENTS AND REPAIRS SINCE LAST MEETING

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer as circulated with the agenda. A member asked if the disabled bays at West Witney Sports Ground had been marked out. The Assistant Operations and Estates Officer replied that they had been done earlier that day. The member complained that the siting alongside the tennis courts meant that you had to back into the spaces and this meant you could not retrieve a mobility aid from the car boot. The Assistant Operations and Estates Officer replied that the Operations and Estates Officer had designed a new layout which should help.

The Chairman updated members on the current situation regarding West Witney Sports and Social Club as 2 successive Chairmen had resigned. However a new Chairman was now in place. The Chairman reported that discussions were taking place but he was not able to elaborate on these at the current time. For this reason he proposed that refurbishment of the bollards/installation of a trip rail should be deferred.

Members were pleased to hear that discussions were taking place and were happy for these to continue and for a report to be brought back to the Committee at an appropriate time.

A member offered his services to the Club as he was a Facilities Manager at a school.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the work on the bollards/installation of a trip rail be deferred.

E323 **CLOSED CHURCHYARDS AND CEMETERIES**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk as circulated with the agenda. Cllr Morris was going to speak to the Area Dean about the pillars at St. Marys, although currently they had not managed to do so. He felt that the Council was exposing itself to risk and a resolution was required quickly. He would seek to have the meeting scheduled for 17 July moved forward.

The Chairman read out a statement from a member of the public who was present on behalf of the Parochial Church Council.

A member referred to the wall between the Church and Henry Box and stated that when he had worked at the school it had been acknowledged that it belonged to it and some work had been done to the self-seeded sycamore tree. However they had not been able to remove the root without damaging the wall.

Cllr Temple entered at 6.25pm.

The member was sure that the school would be helpful and he agreed to speak to them about this.

Referring to the trees at Holy Trinity Church, the Town Clerk explained that nothing could be done until they had been given permission by the tree officer at WODC. Cllr Morris would speak to the Leader of WODC to see if this could be moved up the Tree Officer's list.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the Leader would endeavour to speak with the Area Dean per the delegation by full Council on 25 June 2017 and see if the meeting arranged for 17 July 2017 could be moved forward if at all possible;
3. that Cllr Woodward would speak to Henry Box School about the wall.

E324 **PUBLIC HALLS – OPEARTIONS AND USAGE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Public Halls Officer as circulated with the agenda. He reported that the new blinds in the gallery room looked very good.

A company was visiting the following week to look at improvements to the sound system and the lift was due to be repaired too. The electrical testing was also set up for 14 July.

The Public Halls Officer reported that extra attention was being paid to the floor of the Corn Exchange due to the increased usage.

Burwell Hall continued to be popular with a new tap dance class being booked on Tuesday evenings.

A member congratulated the halls team on their work and suggested taking photos of the gallery room as part of the promotion strategy.

Another member felt that curtains would be helpful to reduce the echo in the gallery room. The RFO confirmed that curtains were budgeted for and they were being looked into.

A member commented that the usage rate looked shocking to him. The RFO suggested that the figures were not as accurate as they could be and the software company would be asked to look at this. She considered that the figures could be skewed from something like the Corn Exchange being used for a polling station.

The Chairman felt that time was needed to see the true picture as the hire charges had only just been adjusted and the Corn Exchange needed more promotion.

Whilst the Chairman was pleased with how the hall was being looked after, he considered the walls to be very blank. The Public Halls Officer advised that the Photographic Society had offered photos such as the ones in the town hall.

A discussion followed on the kitchen situation at the Corn Exchange but it was felt that this was a further phase of development.

The Committee considered an additional report from the Town Clerk on a request from WODC to erect a directional fingerpost sign in the curtilage of the Corn Exchange to the Langdale Court Shopping area and to utilise the wiring for the Christmas Lights to hang bunting or flags across the entrance to Langdale Court. Members felt that the Town Council should support the independent local businesses and were happy to agree to this.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the request from WODC to erect a directional fingerpost sign in the curtilage of the Corn Exchange to the Langdale Court Shopping area and to utilise the wiring for the Christmas lights to hang bunting or flags across the entrance to Langdale Court be granted.

E325 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.

E326 LANGDALE HALL – DRAFT HEADS OF TERMS

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk, along with a report from the Council's property agent, Alder King suggesting draft heads of terms for a lease on the Langdale Hall.

Members attention was drawn to the situation with regard to the Energy Performance Certificate and the consequences of a longer term lease. Members discussed how this could be addressed and agreed to undertaking modest improvements prior to undertaking a new EPC.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the confidential report be noted;
2. that the proposal as detailed in the confidential appendix be agreed.

E327 TOWN HALL CONDITION SURVEY

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk and the condition survey prepared by S J Treloar & Associates, as circulated with the agenda.

Members were concerned about the level of works between now and the end of the lease in 2032. The Town Clerk suggested that a schedule of works be drawn up with costings for a future meeting.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report and condition survey be noted;
2. that officers draw up a schedule of works and costs and bring this to a future meeting;
3. that thought is given to work that may be required between 2018 – 32.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm.

Chairman

