

ESTATES MANAGEMENT MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 5 November 2018

At 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor: J King (Chairman)

Councillors: A K Beames (sub Cllr A D Harvey) P J Dorward (from 6.35pm)
C Brown H B Eaglestone
B J Churchill

Officers: Mrs Sharon Groth - Town Clerk
Mrs Nicky Cayley - Democratic Services Officer
Mr John Hickman - Estates and Operations Officer
Mrs Tracy Minns - Cemeteries Officer

Also present: 1 member of the public

E529 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for his absence was received from Cllr A D Harvey and Mr Peter Miles the Public Halls Officer.

E530 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr King declared an interest in any item relating to Witney Town Bowls Club as his wife was a member.

E531 MINUTES

- a) **RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2018 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
- b) **MATTERS ARISING:**
There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2018 to be discussed at the meeting.

E532 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The member of the public present – Mr Terry Powell – explained that he would be happy to answer any questions about the lighting proposal for the Corn Exchange, which was to be considered as part of the budget setting process.

It was agreed with the permission of the Chairman to take this item next, in order that Mr Terry Powell could answer any questions that may arise on the quotation for the stage lighting proposal for the Corn Exchange, as circulated prior to the meeting.

E533 **REVENUE BUDGET & CAPITAL/SPECIAL PROJECTS PROGRAMME: REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2018/19 AND ESTIMATES 2019/20**

The Operations and Estates Manager asked some technical questions in respect of the lighting rig and the Town Clerk enquired how long such a system might last – Mr Powell replied advised approximately 20 years.

A member asked where the money would come from to pay for the system. The Town Clerk replied that it could be put into next year's budget or from the rolling capital fund.

It was agreed to return to this item later in the meeting for further discussion.

RECOMMENDED: that the quotation be noted and that it be discussed again later in the meeting in the context of the full budget.

E534 **OPERATIONAL REPORT – PROGRESS ON REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS SINCE THE LAST MEETING**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer.

This covered works to the Corn Exchange electrics, Burwell Hall roof, and Langdale Hall external lighting – which had failed. A quotation had been obtained from the Council's electrician in respect of the Langdale Hall external lighting which would cost £1,008. Whilst there was no budget for the Langdale Hall, there was a public halls maintenance earmarked reserve. Members felt that lighting would aid security, and it was largely vulnerable people using the hall, and therefore the repairs should go ahead.

The report also covered replanting of cemetery beds with roses, stolen bollards at Tower Hill Cemetery and the ordering of bollards for Little Green.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the external lights at Langdale Hall be replaced at a cost of £1,008 from the Public Halls maintenance earmarked reserve.

E535 **PUBLIC HALLS – OPERATIONAL AND USAGE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Public Halls Officer and the usage figures. Unfortunately the Officer was unable to be present that evening.

A member asked what had happened after the police had been called to a party at Burwell Hall. The Town Clerk said that the parents would not take any responsibility but their deposit had been retained and they were banned from using any of the Council's halls in future. Another 16th Birthday party booking had since been declined.

A member commented that the booking levels were looking better and another member congratulated the Public Halls Officer's hard work.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted;

E536 **CORN EXCHANGE TAPESTRY**

Members received and considered the report of the P.A to the Mayor/Town Clerk. Members were in favour of having a notice to explain the tapestry in laminated form.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the following laminated notice be placed under the tapestry:

Donated to Witney Town Council by Witney Embroidery Group in 2015.

It depicts the prominent landmarks in the town either aside the River Windrush including the Corn Exchange, Town Hall, Buttercross, the former blanket factory and chimney and St. Mary's Church.

E537 **CEMETERIES**

a) Request from the Friends of the Cemeteries

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. The request for a mirror to see what was coming around the one way system at Tower Hill Cemetery was difficult as the only place to site this was in a grave – members agreed this was inappropriate. There was also a request for additional signage on the one way system, anti-climb paint on the walls, and another notice board at the entrance to Tower Hill Cemetery

The group also wanted a set of rules and regulations for the cemetery users to compliment the Council's existing rules and regulations. The Operations and Estates Officer felt that some were reasonable and some were not. Members agreed they were happy to delegate this to the Operations and Estates Officer and Cemeteries Officer to deal with.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the request for a mirror at Tower Hill Cemetery be denied as the only suitable location to place it was on a grave:
3. that the request for anti climb paint and an additional notice board be denied – the latter owing to the fact that there were three notice boards already present at Tower Hill Cemetery;
4. that additional signage is erected at the one way system at Tower Hill Cemetery.

Cllr Dorward arrived at 6.35pm.

b) Memorial Application

Members received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer on an unusual request for an inscription on a headstone. It contained a quote attributed to Spike Milligan but there was concern that it may cause offence to others. Members voted on the proposal with 2 members abstaining and 4 members voting against permitting the memorial wording.

RECOMMENDED: that the requested wording on the headstone is not permitted.

E538 ST MARY'S CHURCH BOUNDARY WALL

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. There had been an ongoing issue about the ownership of the wall and it now seemed that it belonged to the church, which as the churchyard was closed, now fell to the Council to repair. Officers advised that as the cost could be substantial, the Committee may wish to consider budgeting for this.

Members understood that the work could be phased and agreed that making the wall safe was a priority.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the wall is made safe as a priority, with £10,000 put in the 19/20 estimated budget;
3. that a risk assessment be carried out on the wall and that the wall is added to the Town Council's insurance;
4. that Witney Town Council Officers hold discussions with WODC Conservation Officers and the Diocese prior to any works being undertaken on the wall.

E539 GROUND MAINTENANCE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer.

RECOMMENDED: to allow the Operations and Estates Officer and Grounds Contractors to continue looking at the proposed use of Glyphosate within the grounds contract with a view to bringing a report back to council in the January cycle of meetings.

E540 FINANCE REPORT: BUDGET MONITORING COMMITTEE INCOME & EXPENDITURE TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2018

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

E541 **REVENUE BUDGET & CAPITAL/SPECIAL PROJECTS PROGRAMME: REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2018/19 AND ESTIMATES 2019/20**

a) Revised revenue budget 2018/19 and base revenue budget for 2019/20

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk, which she stress was a first draft at this stage. She highlighted the expenditure on Langdale Hall such as water and telephone charges which she thought the previous RFO had terminated and notified the utilities the change in occupiers – these therefore had not been budgeted for. Once the lease was finalised these along with the rent would be charged to the ICE Centre accordingly.

More work was needed on the salaries as pay scales were due to change consolidating some of the grades to accommodate the changes in the national living wage.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

b) Schedule of proposed burial fees and charges 2019/20

Members received and considered proposed burial charges (an increase of 3%) for 2019/20.

RECOMMENDED: that the proposed charges be approved.

c) Schedule of proposed hall hire fees and charges 2019/20

Members received and considered proposed hall hire fees and charges (an increase of 3%) for 2019/20.

RECOMMENDED: that the proposed charges be approved.

d) Revised Capital & Special Revenue projects programme 2018/19

Members noted that the projects were the refurbishment of the Langdale Hall and £10,000 for damp works and fabric works at the Corn Exchange.

With reference to the earlier report on improvements to the Corn Exchange, members agreed to fund works to the acoustic panels, audio system and lighting out of the ear marked reserves.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that works to the acoustic panels, audio system and lighting in the Corn Exchange be funded out of the ear marked reserves.

e) Revenue growth items and Capital/Special projects programme 2019/20

Members received and considered the report of the Town Clerk.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

E542 **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.

E543 **LEGAL UPDATE ON PROPERTY MATTERS**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk on property matters including the lease for West Witney Bowls Club land, the Cemetery Lodge Old Chapel, West Witney (Curbridge) destination play area, Unterhaching Park and adjacent woodland, 51 Market Square, the Buttercross and outstanding leases.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the confidential report be noted;
2. that the Town Clerk seeks legal advice on the renewal of the lease for the land at West Witney Bowls Club;
3. that the cemetery chapel be used for the Town Council's own storage purposes;
4. that the Town Council requests that the District Council considers the freehold transfer of the land designated for the destination play area at West Witney (Curbridge) development;
5. that the heads of terms on the Unterhaching Park/woodland be accepted.

The meeting closed at 7.50pm.

Chairman