

ESTATES MANAGEMENT MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 7 January 2019

At 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor: J King (Chairman)

Councillors: C Brown H B Eaglestone
B J Churchill J Doughty
D Harvey

Officers: Mr Adam Clapton - Office Manager
Mr John Hickman - Operations and Estates Officer
Mr Peter Miles - Public Halls Officer
Mrs Polly Inness - Communications & Events Officer

Also present: 2 members of the public

E001 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for his absence was received from Cllr P J Dorward and the Town Clerk.

E002 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared at the meeting.

E003 MINUTES

a) **RESOLVED:** that, with a grammatical amendment to minute E536 (2), the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 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 5 November 2018.

E004 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned in line with Standing Order 42 so that Mr N Woodleigh could address the Committee on Agenda Item 11 which concerned a request to install a footpath linking Buttercross Lane to the Leys Recreation Ground by way of an existing gateway.

Following his address Mr T Powell addressed the Committee on Agenda Item 10 and made a statement regarding the agreed sound and lighting for the Corn Exchange. He noted that the controls for this would be in one place at the end of the hall and not in two places as previously discussed.

Following these addresses, the Committee reconvened.

E005 **REQUEST FOR A FOOTPATH FROM BUTTERCROSS LANE ONTO THE LEYS RECREATION GROUND**

It was agreed with the permission of the Chairman to take this item next.

Members considered a request to install a footpath from Buttercross Lane to the Leys Recreation Ground over a piece of grassed land at the Leys. It was noted that this was not an official access-way to the site and was an entrance from a former residential dwelling, the gate being added by the developers of the Buttercross Works during its development. It did however appear that the gate and walkway were being well used by the public and Premier Tennis.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the Operations & Estates Officer investigates the cost of installing a robust footpath from the Buttercross Lane to the Leys and presents this to a future meeting of this committee.

1 member of the public left the meeting at 6.09pm

E006 **OPERATIONAL REPORT – PROGRESS ON REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS SINCE THE LAST MEETING**

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

In addition to the items in the report, members heard that the reception desk at the Corn Exchange had been accidentally damaged during an event at the hall and were made aware of an issue with the alarms system at Langdale Hall. In discussion on the latter, members were concerned about the Council's obligations, changes to the system not agreed by the Council, cover of insurance and negotiations on the cost of works in relation to the Hall's tenants under the draft lease agreement.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that a report is presented to the next Estates Management committee meeting outlining the terms of the Council's agreement with its alarm provider so that a recommendation can be reached.

Cllr C Brown joined the meeting at 6.21pm

E007 **PUBLIC HALLS – OPERATIONAL AND USAGE REPORT**

The Committee were presented with the operational report and usage figures by the Public Halls Officer. There had been several successful large events, some further ones were in preparation and a Wedding Fayre was in hand.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted.

E008 CORN EXCHANGE BOOKINGS & EVENTS

Members received and considered the joint report of the Office Manager, Public Halls Officer and Communications & Events Officer.

Taken in conjunction with Agenda Item 10, members felt that further work was required in order to consider the future of the Corn Exchange as a whole but were in agreement that the council should work towards hosting its own events.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the Council manages its own regular events from existing budgets;
3. that the Public Halls Team and Communications Officer work towards creating a published calendar of monthly events;
4. that the above position is reviewed during the 2020/21 budget-setting cycle.

E009 LOAN OF THE COUNCIL'S STAGE FOR EVENTS HELD IN LANGDALE HALL

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer regarding the loan of the stage for events held in Langdale Hall.

The Committee was in agreement that discussion on the loan of Council equipment to third parties had already taken place and that its previous decision on the matter stood.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that it remains the Council's policy not to loan its equipment to third parties.

E010 HEALTH & SAFETY: CORN EXCHANGE OCCUPANCY RATES

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. During a routine review on compliance the number of patrons permitted in the Corn Exchange at any one time had to be reduced to 182. There were ideas presented that could increase this number but exact costs could not be known without further investigation and it was agreed that this could be considered during discussions on the future use of the hall.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the issues are considered concurrently with the future use and development of the Corn Exchange.

E011 **CORN EXCHANGE PHASE TWO REFURBISHMENT & VISION**

The Committee received and considered the joint report of the Office Manager, Public Halls Officer and Operations and Estates Officer.

Members were in agreement that they were not in a position to make decisions on the future of the building at the meeting, therefore committing a future Council to further development; it was the consensus that they should be concerned with completing the jobs started in this Council term before elections in May. It was noted that the vision statement and consultation that formed it were now over six years old and the committee questioned whether the hall should be developed as an arts centre or a community hall; it was down to the community to decide what they wanted it to be used for and what guise future development should take. There would need to be feasibility studies and further consultation but agreed that it would be beneficial to have something in place for a new Council to work with and move forward with in May 2019.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that a Working Party be established before the end of the Council in May 2019 to formulate a plan on the future re-development of the Corn Exchange which should include interested stakeholders;
2. that this Working Party includes Cllrs J King, D Harvey, B Churchill, C Brown and Mr T Powell;
3. that this Working Party encompasses all of the issues raised during this meeting in terms of a vision/phase two re-development for the hall, future events, the number of patrons allowable and compliance with health and safety practices.

The meeting closed at 7.01pm.

Chairman