

Minutes of the Meeting of the Facilities Committee, St Ives Town Council, held in the Committee Room, The Guildhall, St Ives on Thursday 8 September at 7.00pm

PRESENT

Chairman - Councillor T Andrewes
Vice-Chairman – Councillor S Tanner

COUNCILLORS

Armstrong M	Taylor L
Glanville R	Tulley R
Nicholls C	Williams T
Symons J	

OFFICERS

Town Clerk
Support Services Manager
Facilities Manager

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – were received from Councillors C Chard and A Parsons.

F.163 PUBLIC SPEAKING

None.

F.164 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Chairman signs as true and correct record the Minutes of the Facilities Committee meeting held on 9 June 2016.

F.165 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

F.166 DECLARATION OF MEMBER/OFFICER INTERESTS

None.

F.167 TOWN CLERK'S UPDATE REPORT

The Town Clerk's report was noted. Councillors highlighted their wish for the licence arrangements for the Baulking House to be completed, and the Facilities Manager gave an update on working on potential Health & Safety Contract arrangements in liaison with Penzance and Hayle Town Councils.

The update on Minute F.111 was deferred until later in the meeting, to be considered as a confidential item.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

F.168 FINANCE REPORT

Members noted the finance report circulated with the agenda papers. In response to a question, the Clerk reported that the Visit St Ives income was comparable with the same period last year.

With regard to the significant increase in revenue from wedding bookings, Councillors congratulated the Administration Assistant as lead officer for weddings for a superb job in encouraging a greater use of the Guildhall for ceremonies and the Island Chapel for Blessings.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

F.169 PUBLIC CONVENIENCES – REFURBISHMENT CONSIDERATIONS 2016 / 2017

The Facilities Manager presented a range of considerations and constraints, to help form the basis of refurbishment proposals, to enable detailed specification to be presented to the next meeting. Principles included

- Minimising odours and allowing easy cleaning
- Reflecting the town's young and vibrant image
- Enabling charging, where possible
- Taking a unisex approach, where appropriate
- Retaining urinals in some facilities, particularly busy beach toilets
- Modern and durable décor, encouraging good behaviour
- Easy access and egress, including accessibility provision
- Water and energy efficiency

Officers advised the next step to be the commissioning of architects / designers to evaluate the feasibility of options available, to make the best use of the space available and plan for a refurbishment within budget and to achieve the principles set out above.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- Works need to be carried out in the off-season, so need to get plans drawn up, contracts awarded and works to be carried out ready for Easter 2017
- Noted the importance of ventilation – there has been some improvement at West Pier, but with the limit on window opening due to rain meant that the benefit of the open window was limited
- Smeaton's Gents is in a very poor condition, while the Sloop is in better condition but less well used. It was suggested that improved signposting to the Sloop toilets would increase its use, and that Smeaton's Pier toilets could be closed.
- Consider closing Dove Street toilets and opening up the Guildhall for public toilet use. Officers noted that, as previously discussed, this would likely pose difficulties with other users of the building, including private hires.
- Need to measure footfall in the various facilities – get the basics right first and gather information needed
- If moving to a unisex provision, need to be mindful of queues – as was found at Porthminster, queues grow in the summer if number of urinals reduced.
- When considering the window of opportunity for works, need to be mindful that all town toilets needed to be open for New Year's Eve.
- Suggested a vent and cone solution to improve ventilation at West Pier.
- Care needs to be taken creating unisex toilets.

The Chairman reiterated the previous committee decision to carry out refurbishment work over the winter months, noting that it had been considered at an earlier meeting whether to close any of the blocks of toilets and that it had been agreed at that time that in the summer all public conveniences were needed. The aim was to find more cost effective ways to run the facilities and to provide a higher level of service within the resources available.

RESOLVED – that the approach set out in the Facilities Manager’s report be approved, with agreement to a unisex option at Dove Street toilets, with the Facilities Manager to consult with the project designers used for West Pier public toilets refurbishment, to seek advice on who best to approach for drawing up specifications.

F.170 PUBLIC CONVENIENCES – CLEANING OPTIONS

The Facilities Manager presented his report on options available for cleaning provision for the public conveniences, primarily considerations around continuing with contract cleaning or bringing the service in-house.

Councillors were reminded that 7 toilet blocks were provided, with a budget of £55,000 for the cleaning service. The public toilets are open from dawn to dusk, with a requirement for cleaning, replenishment of consumables and maintenance.

The current cleaning contract was carried out by an external company, with elements of the agreement due to be tightened up. After a visit to a nearby local council with an in-house cleaning service, a key identified advantage of that type of operation was the enthusiasm and local pride to carry out the work to a high standard.

Considerations:

- This council has no experience of delivery and management of this service, and so careful planning and preparation would be required to bring the service in-house
- Recruitment – it had already proved difficult to appoint to the pilot scheme at the Sloop car park toilets, and so recruitment, training and retention would need to be addressed. A recommendation was given that staff contracts be year-round to assist with retention (winter jobs for staff could include painting and basic maintenance in addition to cleaning)
- Transport would need to be considered, including bringing materials and equipment and provision for waste removal.
- The council may wish, or be forced by financial constraints, to review opening and closing times
- There would be an increase in the staff management time of the Facilities Manager in overseeing a team of cleaning staff.
- An overview was given of the successful cleaning arrangements by Newquay Town Council, including income generation through collection of 20p charges
- Newquay has a large off-site store and two vans. They have a commitment to using good quality materials to ensure a high standard of cleanliness and the store was an asset in enabling bulk-buying of replenishment stock and cleaning products.
- An overview of staff costs based on differing working patterns, to indicate affordability and options available.
- Alternative options for opening hours were considered, indicating that a small reduction in opening times would still require a high number of cleaning hours, with a suggestion that an early morning clean could be carried out, then a break, with a greater focus on the busier times of day.

Conclusions:

- Difficulties experienced in operating a cleaning contract with an external contractor.
- Potential gains in quality through in-house delivery, but need to take into account the inherent risks.
- Unlikely to achieve cleaning at a lower cost (town council operates the Living Wage and would have to use better cleaning products than the current contractor).
- Potential reduced maintenance costs, lower transport costs and increased stock costs.
- Greater level of management and administrative time in creating, developing and managing an in-house cleaning service.

Members thanked the Facilities Manager for his report and comprehensive overview.

Points raised during discussion:

- Merits of considering a range of options (exploring the potential for an in-house service against the ability to put the contract back out to tender, etc)
- Need to build in factors such as vehicle leasing, storage etc into the costings
- The current cleaning model was not deemed satisfactory and so alternatives needed to be considered.
- Need to establish optimum opening hours, cleaning times and frequencies and then to find the right shift patterns to cover the work needed within available funds.
- Concern at considering closing earlier in the summer evenings – what would be the alternative for people looking to use a public convenience.
- Considered the potential costs involved, set against the need to improve the service provided.
- More detail on the costs of consumables to help determine whether the service might be viable for a local company or whether it would need to be brought in-house.
- Need detailed costings to enable a decision.

With the broad principles having been explored by the committee, it was agreed that to move this matter on, a working group be set up to consider potential options in greater detail.

RESOLVED – that a working group be established (Facilities Manager, Councillors Andrewes, Glanville and Nicholls), to report back to the next scheduled meeting of this committee.

F.171 GUILDHALL OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The options appraisal for the Guildhall as presented to the previous meeting was considered, with the benefit of intervening time during which Councillors had had the opportunity to deliberate the options suggested. It was noted that the options appraisal had been based on an architectural view of the best use of space in the building to achieve the improvements needed (such as disabled access to the first floor), but that the appraisal had not included the potential costs of works and so at this stage options would be chosen for further investigation into feasibility.

Disabled Access to First Floor – following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED – that Option C be the option to be further pursued (lift from the ground floor from opposite the foot of the stairs)

Relocation of Bar Facilities – following discussion (including the need for the position for the queue for the bar to be considered, so as not to impede access to the hall or to the accessible toilet), it was

RECOMMENDED – that Option C be the option to be further pursued (bar to be located in refurbished area, currently the existing male toilets)

Proposed Ground Floor Plan

The proposed ground floor plan was considered, in the context of toilet provision for the concert hall rather than office proposals at this stage (office uses were likely to vary before funding and implementation of the space changes and so could be considered at a later date).

It was noted that the loss of space from the use of the community rooms was being accommodated by gaining storage in the short term at the nursery next to Trewyn Gardens and could be accommodated in future by additional under-stage storage space.

RECOMMENDED – that as set out in the presentation, the location of the accessible toilet in the concert hall be retained (on a smaller footprint and revised layout), giving access to a new set of Ladies and Gents toilets in a new extension utilising outside space, and the existing Ladies toilets to be reassigned as unisex.

RECOMMENDED – to Council that the improvements to the location and layout of the bar and toilet facilities for the concert hall, and access to the first floor of the Guildhall as set out above be agreed in principle, with the next steps to achieve this to be seeking costings to enable grant applications or budget allocation.

Noted that the recommendation to Council should include the costs of commissioning a surveyor to cost the three elements of the refurbishment proposals, and identifying the budget from which these costs would be drawn.

F.172 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – that in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meeting) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.

F.173 CLEANING CONTRACT – COSTS UPDATE AFTER MEETING WITH CONTRACTORS
(Paragraph 3)

The Facilities Manager presented a report on the costs of the cleaning contract, explaining that costs had increased and that it was likely that the cleaning costs would exceed that budgeted by around £9,000. Discussion centred around whether the operation of the service should be decreased to fit the budget, or to consider closing toilets.

It was noted that with refurbishment works there would be partial closures which would bring about some savings on cleaning costs. It was agreed to explore the cost saving of a unisex provision at West Pier (closing the Gents and retaining the Ladies to be a unisex facility for the winter).

RESOLVED – that the Facilities Manager be instructed to present options to the next meeting of the Facilities Committee, to set out a menu of cost saving options to enable a decision on cost savings / service cuts.

F.174 VISIT ST IVES MANAGER'S REPORT – COMBINED WEBSITE AND JOINT MEMBERSHIP PROPOSALS, WORKING WITH ST IVES BID AND ST IVES TOURISM ASSOCIATION (Paragraph 3)

RESOLVED – that this item be deferred pending full report, after consulting with partner organisations.

F.175 TOWN CLERK'S UPDATE REPORT – DEFERRED ITEM: AGREEMENT WITH FRIENDS OF THE GUILDHALL (Paragraph 3)

In response to a question, the Clerk advised that the agreement with the Friends of the Guildhall had yet to be drafted.

This update was noted.

F.176 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

3rd November 2016

F.177 AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Budget recommendations

Three Year Financial Plan

Performance Indicators