

Minutes of the Meeting of the Facilities Committee, St Ives Town Council held virtually by Zoom, on Thursday 11 March 2021 at 7.00pm

PRESENT

Chairman – Councillor K Arthur
Vice Chairman – Councillor C Nicholls

COUNCILLORS

Dale A	Henry R	Rogers L
Harris A	Lait R	Williams T

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors Wells J, Messenger K, Mitchell A

OFFICERS

Town Clerk
Properties and Amenities Manager
Project Officer

F.29 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor S Tanner

F.30 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

F.31 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Chairman signs as a true and correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 October 2020.

F.32 PUBLIC SPEAKING

None

F.33 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBER/OFFICER INTERESTS

None

F.34 OFFICER'S UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered the Clerk's report and in response to members' comments, the following points were clarified, and amendments agreed:

F.19 LIS – the Clerk confirmed that the LIS would be closed for the Easter bank holiday days and that fines would be re-introduced from the beginning of May to give borrowers enough notice following re-opening in April.

F.9 The Committee agreed that in the light of the current staffing situation, the Council take advantage of a final 12 month extension to the toilet cleaning contract and that CORMAC be notified of the decision. The Clerk advised that as an on-going contract the Council will incur a 3.5% increase in contract sum for the next financial year.

RESOLVED – That subject to the above, the report be noted.

F.35 REVIEW OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE WALLGATES

The Properties and Amenities Manager introduced the item stating that officers were experiencing a number of problems with the wallgates. He acknowledged that the initial reasoning for installing the facilities was to save water and this had been a benefit. But unfortunately, set against that, they were creating many more problems as the report made clear. The units were suffering from numerous failures, such as traps falling off, motors breaking down (these cost £400 when the cost of the electrician and plumber to install them is factored in). Follow up enquiries to the manufacturers, wallgate had confirmed that once a trap falls off the machine is obsolete.

Officers were routinely being called to mend equipment, especially during the Summer season and attending to a variety of related issues such as blockages and breakdowns. Many faults related to the lack of water being emitted but it was not possible to extend this by changing the factory settings. Other failures were believed to be primarily the result of the marine environment. The machines were not delivering enough water to wash the sand away from the traps, resulting in rusting and corrosion. The failure of wallgates is especially pressing, given the pandemic and the need to ensure that all customers can wash their hands thoroughly. Wallgate have been asked to price a maintenance contract. A servicing option is estimated to be around £300 per unit, plus additional costs of replacement components.

In the light of the above, it is proposed that the Committee consider the re-introduction of sinks and taps, using improved technology to address rates of flow. Officers accept that this will be very disappointing for the Committee. However, the current rate of failures and repairs is not sustainable long term and it is better to begin to address this now in a planned way with the costs being spread over time.

Members discussed the issue. A member stated that if this is urgent then it needs to be actioned immediately.

The Town Clerk stated that not all of the units were failing at one time. Some needed attention now but it would not be possible to replace all the units at once (with the work and closures involved) and some were newer than others. This is why a phased approach to the replacements was proposed. A timetable needed to be created, focusing on worst first. In terms of cost, there is no budget for this work currently. Funding for any replacements in this year would need to come from reserves. However, it is hoped that any additional back dated refund of business rates for public conveniences might assist at a future date.

Members expressed the view that if this was being considered, officers take time to evaluate quality durable solutions which had a longer life space. In addition, all components needed to be resilient and vandal proof. It was disappointing that the installation programme had not offered value for money for the Council.

Members recognised the urgency and wanted to ask officers to proceed as soon as possible. However, as the work was not in budget, this would need Council approval. This would give the officers some time to assess the condition of the individual units.

RESOLVED – to RECOMMEND to Council that it approve a replacement programme for the installed wallgate facilities in all public toilets with officers asked to

- i) Work with manufacturers to prepare a report setting out the issues and proposing a replacement programme with a project budget and timetable
- ii) Ensure that any replacement programme should specify fixtures and fittings which were resilient, vandal proof and as far as possible incorporated energy saving measures

F.36 PROPERTY PROJECTS UPDATE

The Town Clerk explained that a status report on projects outsourced to a project manager was brought to the Committee at each meeting. She explained that in the report, the current status is set out for each project but officers were available to answer any questions.

RESOLVED – that the Committee note the maintenance project manager’s update report.

F.37 GUILDHALL ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Chairman and members thanked officers for a comprehensive report. Town Clerk explained that the report was accompanied by an updated project plan and good progress had been made across a number of headings. A cost recovery model had been developed, terms and conditions for bookings, the website was being progressed, an evaluation of payment methods and ticket platform arrangement and a number of potential bookings made. In addition a high quality permanent bar was being built in the hall. The main frustration had been the on-going delays in finalising a technical package of information and construction drawings to enable the toilet modernisation work to be undertaken. This was due to delays with contractors e.g. the architects and technical reports required for knotweed, drainage and engineering. This has had a knock on effect in presenting the tender for contractors to bid for. The Project Officer confirmed this but emphasised that there was positive news that 5–6 local contractors had shown interest in tendering for the project.

Members who had inspected the work confirmed that improvements were progressing well. Members debated the outline funding approval in the Town Investment Plan which would see a further £900,000 invested in the hall. One member was concerned at the high level of external funding support and questioned whether it was necessary.

The Chairman responded stating that as the representative on the Town Deal Board, all proposals needed to meet strict guidance in order to gain funding. The Town Clerk added that the hall requires on-going investment as a valued public space, regardless of whether the current aspirations for live performance were realised. Many items in the hall had not been updated for decades, for example stage curtains and the mechanical ventilation system, the changing rooms and the entrance hall and floor coverings all required investment to bring them up to modern standards.

Other members of the Committee argued strongly that investment in the building was long overdue and the project made a positive contribution to the arts and culture offer for the local community. Minor amendments to the action plan were requested to ensure an accessibility statement was included in the fire and health and safety tasks and all wording in the proposal be gender neutral.

RESOLVED that the Committee

- i) Note the progress to date and the action plan update
- ii) Approve the terms and conditions
- iii) Approve the proposed approach to procurement for the toilet work with a detailed report on the tender process, contract, specification etc being back to the next meeting of the Committee.
- iv) Approve the request that the recruitment of a venues manager can be progressed by the Cultural Services Manager, in consultation with the Staffing Committee and the Town Clerk, the post being in budget and in the establishment.

F.38 FUTURE OPTIONS FOR THE HUERS HUT

The Project Officer introduced the report. He shared location maps and visuals as context, explaining that the Huers Hut is a listed building located on Hain Walk, built in the 1800’s for

fisherman to spot shoals of pilchard in the bay. It had been owned by the Town Council since a transfer as part of local government re-organisation in 1974. Unfortunately, it had been in decline for a number of years. The ground floor was still accessible but the top floor had been rented as garden storage for a private individual. The building was now in serious decay and was in need of full restoration which was the reason for applying for heritage lottery funding. In order to be successful, the funding application needed a proposed end use for the building to demonstrate it had a sustainable future. The report outlined some possible options. It would also be necessary to seek feedback from the wider community on the building's future in order for officers to put together a business case for the application.

Members discussed the recommendations. Key points raised were as follows:

- The public seating area shouldn't be lost – it was available to anyone seeking to rest on the south west coastal path.
- Previous proposals were for it to be offered as an artist's residency (on a rotational basis).
- Proposals which linked to the artistic, arts or fishing heritage of the town were supported
- Was there scope to renovate it without external funding ?

The Project Officer stated that, unfortunately, some remedial work could be possible with in-house staff, but long-term conservation needed require further investment – acrow props were supporting the structure and the front lintel was rotten.

RESOLVED - that the Committee

- i) Support options for a community or commercial end uses for the hut, prioritising uses with links to the Town's artistic, cultural and economic heritage
- ii) Approve all necessary steps, as set out in the report, in order to submit a heritage lottery application.

F.39 **MARKET HOUSE CONDITION SURVEY**

The Building and Amenities Manager introduced a report on the upper floor of Market House which was agreed as part of on-going lease discussions with the tenant. He summarised the report, stating that Market House was structurally sound. There were a few signs of water ingress, and he had concerns regarding the old gas feeds which were switched off but may still be live - this needed investigating. Windows were generally in good condition, toilet and internal/ external doors needed repairing, there were signs of damp due to the lack of ventilation as windows were nailed shut, signs of wood worm would benefit from treatment, the roof was in good order. The main requirement was a full decoration and some remedial repairs would improve the building to a high standard.

The lease discussions were being overseen by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and this report would inform them.

RESOLVED – that the Committee

- i) Note the condition report
- ii) Approve any urgent and safety repairs to be carried out in 2021-22
- iii) Agree that a full internal re-decoration be built into future maintenance programmes
- iv) Agree that the survey forms the basis of a formal schedule of condition to be discussed with the tenant with the future sharing of costs or repairing responsibilities will be reported to the next meeting of the F&GP Committee.

F.40 COMMITTEE REQUESTS: MARKETS AND CONCESSIONS/ TABLES AND CHAIRS AT THE GUILDHALL

The Town Clerk stated that this is a composite report, reflecting a number of requests for the use of the Guildhall and the return of commercial activity:

1. Farmer's Market request for an extension to their subsidised rent up to and including the 8th April: the Committee resolved to RECOMMEND to Council that it approve the request.
2. Return of non-food retail markets from April 12th – Tues, Wed and Thursday. Subject to any changes in the Government's guidelines, the Committee resolved to approve the request.
3. Request for the use of the Guildhall's forecourt for café tables and chairs. Members discussed this request and expressed a number of concerns including insurance risk, responsibility for managing and removing them, potential conflicts with visitors and deliveries, priority given to the installation of a bike rack. The request was therefore not approved.

RESOLVED – that the Committee

- i) RECOMMEND to Council that it continue the Farmers' Market rent reduction up to and including April 8th
- ii) Permit bookings from non-essential retail markets from the 12th of April (under COVID secure conditions)
- iii) Decline a request to use the Guildhall forecourt for café tables and chairs.

F.41 FINANCE REPORT

RESOLVED - that the finance report be noted.

F.42 REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

None.

F.43 CORRESPONDENCE

None.

Date of next scheduled meeting

tbc

Meeting closed at 8.10 pm

Chairman