

5. FACILITIES MANAGERS UPDATE

Outside Spaces

There is no negative activity to report on our Parks, flowerbeds or Public toilets since our last Committee meeting. Park usage is much less at this time of year, especially with the wet weather experienced during December.

Allotments – The two gates at the Pengover road allotments have both failed due to rotten gateposts. The allotments association and ploholders have made their own temporary repairs and work is in hand for the Town Council to replace the posts and gates early in the new financial year.

Westbourne Gardens – Initial talks have begun with Cornwall Council seeking approval of our plans for a new service vehicle entrance to the gardens. The new entrance design necessitates the removal of three hedgerow trees and two larger specimens, plus an area of root protection, and a meeting is planned for Thursday 10th January with the CC Tree Officer to review any potential concerns over loss of tree canopy and habitat.

Public Hall Refurbishment Project

The 'Practical Completion' of the Public Hall refurbishment project was signed off on December 21st with all but a few small snagging issues to be completed. We are currently working on re-installing the more domestic items such as crockery, window dressings, signage etc.

New room and directional signage is being designed in conjunction with the C&E Committee and will be installed ASAP. Second fix and commissioning of the new kitchen equipment is planned for w/c 7th January.

The Changing Places accessible toilet has been fitted out with the shower, electrically adjustable changing bed, portable electric lifting hoist and height adjustable washbasin. Additional items such as paper roll for the changing bed, clinical disposal bin etc. are due very shortly.

Due to the provision of more specialist equipment in this toilet (lifting equipment, shower etc.) advice is being sought from Ellis Whittam on the management of the facility, staff training, cleaning regimes and signage / user information.

Meanwhile the new facility will be registered with the Changing Places organisation for listing on their website, which also links with the cornwall.gov.uk website.

The additional item of the platform lift to the Stage in the Main Hall is planned for installation on 15th January and completion is expected in time for our next large event, the Lions Panto.

Guildhall

Progress on the issuing of two lease renewal notices at the Guildhall has been protracted but is expected to be transferred from the Truro branch to the Liskeard branch of the Town Councils' solicitors very shortly, when the new leases can then be completed more swiftly.

The tenant of Shop Unit 3 has given notice to quit as they are expanding into larger premises within the Town. We are currently in negotiation with a potential new tenant for that shop unit.

7. Fees and Charges

(A) Public Hall Complex room hire charges – The Public Hall room hire charges have not increased for over two years. Our overheads such as heat, light, power and wages have all increased substantially in that time and it is felt that given the considerable investment from the recent refurbishment, which has added important enhancements to the facilities we offer, and the decision not to opt to tax (VAT), an increase in our charges is now fully justifiable. The current charges for ancillary items such as flip chart hire are considered sufficient at this time although some items such as the PRS fee do require consideration. Any percentage price increase should be rounded and applied to sensible price points. The draft Facilities budget for 2019/20 has been constructed using a 5% price increase.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Committee APPROVES a 5% price increase to all Public Hall room hire fees, effective from April 1st 2019, as proposed in the draft 2019/20 Facilities budget.

(B) Cornwall Council discounted hire fees – Room bookings by Cornwall Council currently attract a 25% discount on our standard commercial booking charges. I understand this was originally from a reciprocal arrangement whereby the Town Council also enjoyed additional benefits from Cornwall Council, which now no longer exist.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Committee APPROVES the removal of the 25% discount applied to Cornwall Council bookings of the Public Hall facilities, with all future bookings from April 1st 2019 to be at the standard commercial rates prevailing at that time.

(C) Allotment rents and charges – Our current allotment rents vary between £15 and £30 depending on plot size. A limited survey of local commercial allotment providers, plus Town and Parish Councils, gives a range of £12 to £80 per year. The lower amount by Parish councils and the higher by commercial and larger Town Councils. Our current rents and water charges receivable largely break even against our costs for hedge trimming, general maintenance and water supply costs. Although unplanned repairs and maintenance costs are generally minimal for the allotment sites any substantial repairs or renewals, such as the new gates at Pengover road, incur a net cost to the Town Council.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Committee DISCUSSES AND CONSIDERS the need and degree of any rent increases at the Pengover Road and Lake Lane allotment sites.

8. Facilities Budget Setting 2019/20

Following further consideration by the Town Council members in general and additional input from the Chair and Vice Chair of the Facilities Committee the attached, updated, DRAFT Facilities Committee budget for 2019/20 is presented for this Committees consideration.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Committee APPROVES the final draft 2019/20 Facilities Committee budget for submission to Council for 2019/20 precept setting.

9. Council Chamber Usage and Furniture

The November 20th Facilities Committee meeting resolved, A) To defer any decision on the Council Chamber usage and furniture pending further investigation into the provenance of the furniture and more detailed costing of any alternative schemes. B) That an open letter be written to the Cornish Times newspaper seeking any knowledge of the history relating to the large 'D' shaped table currently in the Council Chamber.

Following that meeting I had a conversation with Tony Ball who had worked in the Guildhall as part of his duties with the Magistrates Court at that time. Mr Ball agreed to make further researches and report back. His report and some additional information from Mrs Eileen Crouch are attached.

In contacting the Cornish Times to submit an open letter, as instructed by the Committee, a request was received from Karenza Moore to feature a larger article on both the recent refurbishment project and the research into the history of the table. An article was duly published on Friday 28th December 2018 and called for anyone with information on the Chamber table to contact the Facilities manager. As at January 5th 2019 no additional information has been received.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Committee APPROVE AND APPOINT a Working Group of members of the Facilities Committee with terms of reference to give detailed consideration to the options for the future use of the Council Chamber, and to present a fully costed recommendation to the Facilities Committee meeting on March 12th 2019.

10. Public Hall refurbishment budget update

The latest valuation of the Public Hall refurbishment project costs will be presented in detail by the Chair and Vice Chair, for information.

11. One Public Transport System for Cornwall Project

This item has been referred to this committee from the Planning committee, for any comments regarding the Cornwall Council proposals to upgrade some of the towns bus stops with live information boards, plus the addition of two new stops on Greenbank Road.