

**ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL**  
**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE GUILDHALL COMMITTEE**  
**MONDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2018**

**Agenda item 6: Guildhall Development Working Group**

Working Group meetings

The Working Group meets regularly and the notes of the meetings of 8<sup>th</sup> June and 15<sup>th</sup> June 2018 are attached to this report as appendices A and B.

I also attach a summary report of the meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018 (appendix C), which will be supplemented by a verbal update.

Financial update on the building project

Whilst the Special Meeting was not convened to discuss this matter, regular updates on the building project being submitted to the Guildhall Development Working Group, it is expedient to report to the full Committee as it is meeting with a financial update.

The financial update in relation to the building works is contained in a separate pdf document from Leys Longden Chartered Surveyors. This update was presented to the Guildhall Development Working Group at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2018 and was gone through in some detail. Capital costs are now shown as £524,272 compared with original contract value of £400,727, an increase of £123,500. The reasons for this variation are detailed in Mr Longden's paper. The major variations are a result of an increase scope of works, including the removal of the old ramp on the south side of the building, introduction of uplighters and upgraded toilets, the Space for Change WC and proposed alterations to the Old Magistrates Court. There have also been additional works to undertake which could not have reasonably been foreseen ahead of commissioning the work.

With builders onsite the opportunity has been taken to address some maintenance items which it has been expedient to deal with during the course of the contract. As Members will be aware, maintenance and repair of an historic building is an ongoing task and will need to continue to be budgeted for in future years. The financial statement shows an additional total of £52,000 in relation to repair and maintenance, being funded from revenue resulting in a total of £576,227.

Members will be aware but it is worth detailing here the procedural way in which contract variations are dealt with. No contingency was provided for within the contract itself, meaning that additional expenditure cannot be authorised by the contractor. Variations are issued by the contract administrator. Note as a separate matter there is a contingency in the overall Project. Leys Longden Chartered Surveyors act as the surveyors, contract administrators and project managers. In this role they scrutinise costs as the project progresses and issue necessary variations, having frequent continuous contact with the Town Clerk in this regard. They also regularly report back

to the Guildhall Development Working Group, which has delegated responsibility for ongoing management of the project. A report is submitted to each meeting of the Guildhall Committee and variations which involve a major change to the approved plans, for instance the “Space to Change” WC are approved by the Council. The Council has also retained Peter Turvey, quantity surveyor PT Projects, who provided advice on the original contract costs and has also given advice regarding the price of major variations.

Jonathan Longden of Leys Longden Chartered Surveyors, will be present at the meeting to go through the detail and answer any questions in relation to this matter and the building project more generally. Inside Out Developments on course to complete their works to enable the Guildhall to be re-open in September 2018.

**The Committee is requested to approve the financial update.**

#### Guildhall fees and charges

The Finance and General Purposes Committee of 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018 approved the charging principles recommended by the Guildhall Committee as follows:

- Subsidised rate for community groups;
- Commercial rates for business meetings, conferences etc;
- Wedding rates set at realistic level, aware of need for an option for local people who have a limited budget.

Agreement of the room hire and other charges is delegated to this Committee. The Guildhall Development Working Group considered room hire fees and charges at its meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018 and considered a report from the Treasurer/ RFO in this regard. That report, annotated to reflect the deliberations of the Working Group, is now brought forward to this meeting for agreement as the basis for the Guildhall room hire fees and charges. It is important that these are now agreed as they will impact upon any agreement in relation to outsourced management and operation of the service.

**The Committee is requested to agree Guildhall fees and charges.** This will be a resolved matter.

Nigel Warner  
Town Clerk  
23<sup>rd</sup> June 2018.

**APPENDIX A**

**Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council**

Notes of the Guildhall Working Group of Friday 8th June 2018 which took place at 2:00pm in the Bear Room, The Guildhall, Abingdon-on-Thames.

Present:

Councillor Dennis Garrett	Chairman
Councillor Michael Badcock	Vice-Chairman
Councillor Margaret Crick	
Councillor Jan Morter	

In attendance:

Mr Steve Rich	Asst. Town Clerk / Head of Services
Mrs Susan Whipp	Treasurer/ Responsible Finance Officer
Mrs Jo Blackmore	Meeting Clerk
Mr Jonathan Longden	Leys Longden
Mr Huw Edmunds	Huw Edmunds Associates
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk

1 **Election of Chairman**

Proposed, Seconded and **resolved** that Cllr Dennis Garrett be elected Chairman of the Guildhall Development Working Group for the Council year 2018/19.

2 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Neil Fawcett.

3 **Declarations of interest**

None.

4 **Minutes of the meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

5 **Matters arising**

None.

6 **Update on Building Works**

Notes/actions from Contract Meeting 12 on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2018 were circulated and the following paragraphs highlighted.

- 1.2 A financial update will be provided next week as waiting for some costs.

Additional costs have been for maintenance work, specifications being raised and additional work, the major one being the 'Space for Change' toilet.

Mr Longden considered that any change in scope resulting in additional maintenance work could delay the contract completion date and so would be avoided and planned for a future date. The expectation is that some work to the roof will be required over the Bear Room in the future.

- 1.3 Steel in. Roofers due in Wednesday.

- 1.4 The waterproof covering on the Abbey Hall entrances have kept water out in the torrential rain we have had recently and the rooms underneath have continued to dry out. Slabs will be put back soon.

- 1.6 Roof not started due to waiting for scaffolding to come down.

- 1.8 The heating pipe in the way of the platform lift has been moved.

- 1.9 The plan is to expose the spiral staircase.

The hoist size of 200kg is due to sizes of hoist available.

- 1.10 The uplighters' wiring is due next week.

Thames Water will fix the water leak at some point in the future.

- 1.11 Roysse Room decorations. The current white walls look bland. **Resolved** that selected beading around the panels are painted the same colour as the ceiling. Mr Longden confirmed that listed building consent would not be required for this.

Poor lighting is also an issue in the room. It was suggested (but not agreed at this stage) that uplighters could be placed around the edge of the room.

#### Other matters – Kitchen and corridor

- a The hatch between the new corridor and the Roysse Room. Will it be a Health and Safety issue to continue using this, or does it require blocking off?
- b How will the proposed kitchen doors open onto the corridor. Huw Edmunds to confirm.

The Guildhall is scheduled to open for bookings at the beginning of September 2018.

*The Town Clerk left the meeting at this point.*

## 7 **Update on Guildhall re-opening**

Please refer to Huw Edmund Associates Guildhall Reactivation Weekly Report 8<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

- 1 **Resolved**, the Logo has been confirmed.
- 2 The website should be ready to look at next week. The copy on the site requires reviewing.
- 3 Printed materials need planning now.
- 4 Photography. Huw Edmunds would like new photos taken as the previous ones do not reflect what the rooms will look like in the future.
- 5 Use chair covers to improve the look of the current chairs. Question raised as to whether they are fire retardant.
- 6 Use the current six-foot round tables. We currently own ten of these.  
The aim is to persuade the clients to use layouts best suited to the rooms.
- 7.1 The reception/foyer is the first place that the clients see so it must appear light, airy and modern, and be functional.
- 7.2 Provide good signage/branding within the building and out at the front. Placing anything on the outside of the building will be difficult due to the effect on the character of the building and therefore listed building consent would be required but it is possible to place something in the Roysse Court Gardens and on the glass doors.
- 7.3 Flooring - must not create an echo and must be able to cope with wet and muddy feet.  
It is assumed that the information centre will not be in the new foyer.
- 8 The catering tender must be referred to the Guildhall Committee. A specification is required before it can go out to tender. Huw Edmunds to liaise with the Asst. Town Clerk.
- 9 Further discussion is required on the preferred list of caterers. Also the certificates required by law and good practice to use a commercial kitchen needs to be confirmed.
- 10.1 Audio/Visual demo. The council were not impressed with the demonstration. There was no sound and no prepared demonstration. No microphones were supplied to show how these work.
- 10.2 Need to establish the type of screen that conferences would expect. A screen would also be useful for council meetings e.g. planning. Ideally the screen could be used in both the Roysse Room and Old Magistrates Court and stored in the Old Magistrates Court when not in use.

Will the screen fit on the platform lift?

Suggested that the Guildhall starts with one screen. It could also be used in the foyer for display purposes.

Individual microphones for each member would be helpful.

7 **Next Meeting**

Next meeting arranged for Friday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2018 at 2:00pm

The meeting rose at 3:00pm

## APPENDIX B

### Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Draft Notes of the Guildhall Working Group of Friday 15th June 2018 which took place at 2.00pm in the Roysse Room, The Guildhall, Abingdon-on-Thames.

Present:

Councillor Dennis Garrett	Chairman
Councillor Michael Badcock	Vice-Chairman
Councillor Neil Fawcett	
Councillor Jan Morter	
Councillor Margaret Crick	Mayor (ex-officio)

In attendance

Mrs Jo Blackmore	Meeting Clerk
Mr Huw Edmunds	Huw Edmunds Associates
Mr Jonathan Longden	Leys Longden
Mr Steve Rich	Asst. Town Clerk / Head of Services
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk
Mrs Susan Whipp	Treasurer/ Responsible Finance Officer

1 **Apologies**

No apologies were received.

2 **Declarations of interest**

None.

3 **Minutes of the meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

4 **Matters arising**

Kitchen – see minute 8 (below).

5 **Update on Building Works**

An interim financial update was circulated and the following points highlighted.

- 6 Roysse Court paving increased costs are due to drainage requirements and the amount of services found. Some of the drains having to be dug by hand. They are having some problems accessing the site for deliveries because of its location; road junctions.

- 8 **Resolved** – To remove the false floor in the Old Magistrates Court. This will require steps to the cells and the robing room to be altered and an asbestos survey for refurbishment/ demolition.
- 9 “Space to Change.” Performing the asbestos removal works requires fourteen days’ notice.  
The door will be hung using “piano hinges” because it is so heavy however this may lead to the door requiring power assisted opening due to its weight.
- a This has been slow to complete due to checking that there are no more water leaks.
- b Roof maintenance needs to be curtailed as it is starting to impact on the main project. Roof maintenance has reached the edge of the Bear Room.
- c Some of the finance for the decorating has already been approved.  
Staircase – the carpet needs to be removed and location recorded so it can be fitted again to establish the state of the staircase and what maintenance is required. **Required** – photographs of the staircase and its condition.  
**Resolved** – Decoration to the part of main contract – contractors will subcontract to a specialist firm of decorators.

## 6 **WiFi System**

The Working Group received and considered the WiFi specification and costs, as circulated in the papers to the Finance and General Purposes Committee of 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018 and delegated to the Working Group for decision.

Points made:

- Ensure that the system has enough capacity to cover a busy conference and is easily upgradeable. Note also that people often have more than one device.
- Ensure that the system can be extended to cover the Abbey Hall.

**Resolved:** that the WiFi specification be agreed and authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to commission the system.

## 7 **Fees and Charges**

The Working Group received and considered the report from the Treasurer/Responsible Financial Officer, which was an updated and consolidated version of information previously circulated. Members were also referred to the Huw Edmunds report for 8<sup>th</sup> June 2018 meeting (previously circulated; treated as confidential as certain parts of the document are commercially sensitive pending procurement).



The principles agreed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee in relation to the setting of fees and charges in relation to the Guildhall were:

- Subsidised rates for community groups;
- Commercial rates for business meetings, conferences etc.;
- Wedding rates set at realistic level, aware of need for an option for local people who have a limited budget.

#### Points raised during the meeting

- Compare with Didcot Civic Hall as the rooms are of similar sizes. The meeting felt that a slightly higher rate could be charged as the Guildhall rooms are historic and cost more to upkeep.
- Charge per sessions.
  - Suggest three sessions a day – morning, afternoon and evening.
  - Charge more for evening and weekend sessions.
- Have a schedule of fees including a package rate.
- Create a rate for weddings.
- Do not split costs down to setting up/down of rooms, tea and coffee etc.
- Commercial – optimise income. Huw Edmunds to suggest some rates for this.
- Community:
  - The Vale were criticised when they increased charges.
  - The Town Council has previously stated that they going to ensure an affordable price to community groups.
  - This is a community facility paid for by Abingdon Council Tax payers.
  - The meeting felt that to benefit from the community rate groups must be flexible i.e. when their regular booking clashes with an event already booked or booked afterwards. The terms and conditions of booking must reflect this.
  - In relation to usage of the Council Chamber and the Roysse Room it was considered that the minimum notice for a wedding would be approx. six months and for a conference approx. three months.
  - Hires by the District Council and County Council to be classified as community uses.

Agreed actions for next meeting – Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> June.

1. Community fees and charges – Town Council officers to make recommendations.
2. Make suggestions for commercial rates – Huw Edmunds

8 **Kitchen** – also see Matters arising.

The following points were made in relation to the use of the commercial kitchen:

- Concern about the viability of sharing the kitchen between Guildhall activities and the cinema.
  - Kitchen facilities important for both uses.
  - Wedding receptions/conferences are booked in advance so liaison regarding usage between the two should be possible.
  - Timings are likely to be different as conferences and weddings tend to occur during the day and most cinema usage is likely to be in the evening. Any major events that require kitchen use will have a reasonable advance notice (the minimum booking times for a wedding was felt to be six months and a conference three months) which the cinema could be made aware of and arrangements made accordingly.
  - Likely problem areas include dishwashing and food storage.
  - Would it be possible to split the kitchen space wise and practically?
  - How is the kitchen going to be used; to cook from raw ingredients or to reheat food prepared elsewhere?
  - The cinema would like space set aside for their use. The back of the Abbey Hall (accessed by the catering microlift) does not meet their requirements. Unknown exactly what equipment they require.
  - Is the resized kitchen large enough to partition, and is it able to be partitioned?
- Further information required:
  - Establish possibilities with experts, chefs/caterers.
  - Talk to the cinema to find out more detail on what they require.

- The two specifications obtained do not agree so are not readily compared. A single specification needs drafting so tenders can be obtained.

**Actions:**

- Establish whether the kitchen will be used to reheat or cook from raw ingredients.
  - Discuss possibilities with experts, chefs/caterers.
- Establish exactly what the cinema requires, in terms of equipment, storage, dishwashing etc.
- Establish a kitchen specification and as part of this resolve the issues surrounding the proposed sharing of the kitchen.
- Put the kitchen specification out to tender.

9 **General update and decisions on other items**

Brochure

Huw Edmunds presented the meeting with an example brochure.

Comments raised:

- The photos used were agreed as acceptable.
- The photos on the brochure appear to run into each other, requested to try alternating the pictures with the text.

Website

Suggestions as to what to include on the website:

- Floor plans.
- Room layouts.

Huw Edmunds requested ideas for the website and foyer.

Guildhall access and potential bookings

The following points were made:

- Is the Guildhall only going to be open when the rooms are occupied?
- Who is going to be available to show potential customers around?
- The Town Council are not staffing the Guildhall so these issues will be for the contractor managing and operating the Guildhall to resolve.

Information Centre

The assumption is being made that the Information Centre will not be returning to the foyer/annexe. **Action:** A recommendation needs to be put to the Guildhall Committee and then to the Town Council.

## Equipping the Guildhall

- New Foyer design: The Guildhall Committee had considered a report from Huw Edmunds Associates and estimates for the implementation of a new foyer design, carpeting for the foyer and a brochure rack system to be funded from the existing furniture and equipment budget and in these circumstances; budget was already available and so this was referred back to the Guildhall Development Working Group for implementation. The design of the foyer would be informed by two unresolved matters which required decisions as soon as possible:
  - The arrangements between the Abbey Hall (cinema) and the Guildhall in relation to reception etc.;
  - Consideration of the future location of the Information Centre (see above) noting that it the current location in the Museum has been agreed during the duration of the works.

### 10. Next meeting

The next meeting of the Guildhall Development Working Group was agreed as Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> June at 2.00pm.

The meeting rose at 3.40pm

## APPENDIX C

### **Guildhall Development Working Group - 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018**

#### **Annotated agenda with summary decisions/ recommendations**

Members present: Cllr Dennis Garrett (Chairman), Cllrs Mike Badcock, Jan Morter, Margaret Crick (Mayor, ex-officio).

Also in attendance: Jo Blackmore (Administrator), Huw Edmunds (Huw Edmunds Associates), Steve Rich (Asst Town Clerk/ Head of Services), Nigel Warner (Town Clerk, part of meeting).

Apologies: Cllr Neil Fawcett.

1. Notes of meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> June 2018 – agreed.
  
2. Matters arising.
  - WiFi update. Town Clerk gave update.
    - Install Cat 6 – additional cost £330, agreed.
    - Confirmed that WiFi will cover the whole building (i.e. Guildhall and Abbey Hall), noted and agreed.
  
  - Reception. Working Group felt that locating the Information Centre in the Guildhall (Bridge Street/ Roysse Room Foyer) was not the right location and that there was a conflict between its location and the ability to develop the facility in the future, for example when there are weddings and other functions the operation of the Information Centre can interfere with customers' enjoyment of the facility and flow of users. The space is also constricted in this area. Therefore recommended to the Guildhall Committee that the Guildhall reception at Bridge Street reverts to its previous role and function and that consequently provision is not made for the Information Centre to occupy this space. Note in the regard that the Information Centre was at this location from September 2015 to May 2018 having previously been at the Old Abbey House and then the Abbey Hall reception. Further suggested that provision for Information Centre be part of Community Hub at the Abbey Hall and in the interim should remain in the County Hall Museum.
  
- The Town Clerk left the meeting at this point.*
  
3. Fees and charges. To make a recommendation to the Guildhall Committee of 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018.
  - Officer recommendations on setting charges for Guildhall Room Hire agreed for recommendation to the Guildhall Committee as per the annotated report (appendix D).
  
4. Kitchen.

- Asst Town Clerk now to project manage this matter and to report back to the Guildhall Development Working Group. Agreed.
5. Reception – function and design.

- More information required from Jonathan Longden and the Regal Cinema before further decisions can be made.
6. Audio- visual.

Demonstration on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> June in the evening.

- Confirmed to install full AV equipment in Roysse Room initially subject to note on specification below.
  - Consider audio only in Council Chamber.
  - Specification of equipment quoted was questioned as to whether it was too high for what we required. Agreed to see the demonstration and then decide.
7. Website, stationery, photography and other relaunch items.
- Agreed to use existing photographs.
  - More consideration of the other matters required. Huw is Edmunds issuing a form requesting councillors' ideas on the image to use for the main screen on the web design.

## APPENDIX D

### Guildhall Development Working Group

#### Officer recommendations on setting charges for Guildhall Room Hire

Report approved by the Working Group at its meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018 for consideration by the Guildhall Committee. Working Group amendments and other notes shown in red font.

Additional officer comments subsequent to the meeting are shown in blue.

At the meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018, it was resolved that the charging principles should be:

- (i) Subsidised rates for community groups
- (ii) Commercial rates for business meetings, conferences etc
- (iii) Wedding rates set at realistic level, aware of need for local people who have a limited budget

A summary of charges at other local venues was reported to the meeting of the Guildhall Development Working Group on 15<sup>th</sup> June. The working group then asked officers to produce a further report making recommendations on charges.

Recommendations agreed at this meeting will then be considered at the special meeting of the Guildhall Committee on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2018. The Guildhall Committee has resolved powers in this regard.

#### **(i) Community Groups**

Further to the previous meeting when comparisons were presented with other venues, I have obtained additional room hire charges from some of the community centres within the town:

##### **North East Abingdon Community Centre:**

Sunday – Thursday / Fri & Sat daytime: £21 per hour (includes 30 mins for customer to set up and tidy up either side of booked time)

Friday or Saturday evening: £110 per session

##### **Long Furlong Community Centre**

Different rates are offered for residents of Long Furlong estate, off the estates, commercial and regular hirers. With the exception of regular hirers, bookings are made by sessions rather than hourly rates. Hirers have the option of hiring one or both halls:

Session	One Hall (on estate / off / commercial)	Combined Halls (on estate / off / commercial)
8am – 12 noon	£32 / £40 / £50	£50 / £65 / £85
12:30pm – 5:30pm	£40 / £48 / £70	£65 / £80 / £110

7pm – 11:30pm	£60 / £70 / £110	£105 / £120 / £160
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Regular users have the option to hire on an hourly basis, £15 per hour.

### **Preston Road Community Centre**

I contacted the community centre but they would not disclose the rates. I was told that charges are calculated at an affordable price to the community with a scale of charges set out to ensure everyone is treated equitably and according to purpose.

ATC used the medium hall and kitchen in the community centre in September 2017 and was charged £40 for 5 hours.

### Comparison of rates

The list below shows the average daytime hourly rates for various locations in and around Abingdon. Some of the other venues charge differing rates depending on time of day / day of the week.

#### Royse Room and Council Chamber

ATC previous charge		→ £19.80 per hour
NEA Community Centre	Main Hall	→ £10.50 per hour
Long Furlong	Both halls	→ £14.44 per hour
Long Furlong	One Hall	→ £15 per hour (on hourly basis)
Didcot Civic Hall	Ladygrove Room	→ £13 per hour
Burwell Hall, Witney	Main Hall	→ £13.13 per hour
The Beacon, Wantage	The Lockinge	→ £24.50 per hour

#### Abbey Room and Bear Room

ATC previous charge	£29 per 3 hours	→ £11.70 per hour
Long Furlong	One Hall	→ £8.90 per hour
Preston Road	Medium hall	→ £8 per hour (based on ATC use)
Didcot Civic Hall	Northbourne Room	→ £12 per hour
Didcot Civic Hall	Park Room	→ £10 per hour
The Beacon, Wantage	The Hanney	→ £15.30 per hour
Burwell Hall, Witney	Meeting Room	→ £12.50 per hour



Officer recommendations:

1. Considering the agreed approach of sessions rather than hiring for one hour only, I recommend that the **minimum hire would be for two hours**. This includes all setting up and tidying up time the customer can take. This is in line with the approach taken at NEACC. Making the minimum session longer than two hours could deter users such as hourly exercise classes / shorter meetings.
2. In order to make the charging structure straight forward for customers, I recommend that rates are regardless of time of day / day of the week. The policy at other halls seems mixed, with some halls charging more for weekends / evenings. As the agreed principle is that charging of community groups is subsidised by commercial bookings I would suggest that charging higher rates in order to maximise income conflicts with that principle.
3. Not for profit (NFP) community groups should complete a registration form and provide details of their charitable status (if applicable) and would then benefit from a **10% discount** of the standard room charges. In order to benefit from this discount, ATC would reserve the right to change rooms with no notice.
4. As a measure to support local business, other local groups (profit orientated e.g. yoga teachers / judo / dance) should be subject to the following community rates **if they book at least 5 sessions** (e.g. weekly) and pay for all booked sessions in advance of the first session.

<b>Room</b>	<b>Standard rate</b>	<b>NFP community group</b>
Royse Room	£20.00 per hour	£17.00 per hour
Council Chamber	£20.00 per hour	£17.00 per hour
Abbey Room	£12.00 per hour	£10.00 per hour
Bear Room	£12.00 per hour	£10.00 per hour
Old Magistrates Court	£12.00 per hour	£10.00 per hour

*Members are reminded that we have opted to tax the Guildhall and these recommended rates are inclusive of VAT.*

The minimum booking will be for two hours.

5. Otherwise, local profit orientated groups should be subject to commercial rates, determined by the outsourced management of the Guildhall.
6. In order to maximise opportunity for commercial bookings / conferences, local businesses and NFP community groups are able to book any of the historic rooms:

Royse Room and Council Chamber

- Saturdays and Sundays open to bookings 6 months in advance

- Mondays – Fridays 8am to 6pm open to bookings 3 months in advance; 6pm onwards open to bookings 12 months in advance.

Abbey Room, Bear Room and OMC

- Open to bookings 12 months in advance.

**(ii) Commercial bookings**

This report makes no recommendations regarding commercial rates.

**(iii) Weddings**

This section of report contains recommendations for hire of rooms for wedding ceremonies only. It does not consider charges for wedding reception packages, these are outside the scope of the report as they will be agreed by the outsourced management.

Historic Town Halls

The following are local examples of historic settings for weddings in panelled with works of art etc.

ATC	2.5 hours, room only	→ £154
Wallingford Town Hall	Whole building, 2 hours	→ £420
Henley Town Hall	Council Chamber	→ £500
Woodstock Town Hall	One room, 2 hrs	→ £250

For comparison, wedding ceremonies also take place at Didcot Civic Hall, which is a more contemporary setting:

Didcot Civic Hall	Ladygrove Room, 2 hours	→ £98.40
Didcot Civic Hall	Northbourne Room, 2 hours	→ £90
Didcot Civic Hall	All Saints Room, 2 hours	→ £82.80

All of the rates quoted above do not include registrar fees, these would be paid separately by the customer, direct to OCC.

I have had a useful discussion with an officer at Wallingford Town Council. They have tried several wedding room-hire models and have concluded that two hours is sufficient length of time for a simple service. Their room hire package for weddings includes two rooms, one of which the bridal party can use prior to the service, or guests can wait in before entering the main ceremony room. I would suggest that the foyer area is sufficient within the Guildhall to remove any need for additional room space.

The policy agreed at the last meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is that Wedding rates will be set at a realistic level, aware of the need for local people who have a limited budget. **No recommendations were made at the Guildhall Development Working Group referred to the Guildhall Committee.**

Officer recommendation:

The definition of a realistic level is open to interpretation and consequently members are requested to consider what would be an appropriate charge for wedding ceremonies, taking into account the previous charges at the Guildhall and those at similar venues elsewhere.

Susan Whipp, Treasurer / RFO

21<sup>st</sup> June 2018