



MINUTES

Meeting: VICTORY HALL COMMITTEE

Date: 4th April 2019

Time: 6.30pm

Venue: PARISH COUNCIL OFFICES, HAINAULT ROAD, CHIGWELL

PRESENT: Councillors (3)

Councillors: Rochelle Hodds (Chairman), Richard Alvin and Alan Lion

Officers (1)

Mark Hembury – Responsible Financial Officer

Also in Attendance (1)

There was one member of the public in attendance.

18.13 RECORDING OF MEETINGS

NOTED that in accordance with Standing Order 3 (i) photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting may take place.

18.14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1)

Councillor: Deborah Barlow

18.15 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

The Chairman advised members she had received a letter from Councillor Sunger tendering his resignation as a member of this committee in his own right. However, because of his present role as Chairman of the Parish Council he remains an ex-officio member of this committee.

18.16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was **NOTED** that there were no declarations of interest.



18.17 VICTORY HALL UPDATE

Councillor Alvin advised the meeting that a new lease had been prepared for the Members Club, that was based upon a standard non-landlord/tenant template. This would be ready to give to the Club soon. The lease was for five years with a one-year notice period. This would allow the Council to make a decision regarding the future of the site and a possible community hub development. The lease would include the Club taking responsibility for utility bills directly.

The RFO advised the meeting that a number of issues have to be addressed to ensure that Victory Hall is Health and Safety compliant, including the replacement of fire extinguishers that are already ordered and will be installed on 23rd April. A fire risk assessment has also been conducted, and as a fire alarm had been recommended, quotes were being obtained that would subsequently be placed before the committee.

Councillor Lion raised objections to the potential spend on the building and said there should be a business case. He asked why the Council were taking on the Victory Hall and could not support the matter. Councillor Lion further stated he could not understand why the Lewis Foundation were not offered the chance to continue managing the hall.

Councillor Alvin stated that the decision to take over the Victory Hall was one made by full Council and the role of the committee was to put this decision into effect. The hall itself was self-financing over the course of a year. It was acknowledged that further matters relating to the Victory Hall would be covered in later on in the agenda.

18.18 MISSION STATEMENT

After a brief discussion, it was then moved by the Chairman and **RESOLVED** that:

- This matter be deferred to the next meeting.

18.19 HIRE CHARGES OF VICTORY HALL/PRICING POLICY

Members were advised that the Lewis memorial and Victory Hall Foundation charges: £250 – daily rate and £30.00 – hourly rate. Members were further advised that until any decision to the contrary, regular users of the hall and casual bookings would be dealt with just as they had been by the Lewis Foundation. The RFO advised the meeting that there is currently no price differentiation for hirers who are Chigwell residents as opposed to those who live outside of the parish.

The Chairman stated that charges being the same for weekdays and weekends was unusual. Councillor Alvin suggested that the costs for hire of similar venues in the area should be examined so that further consideration could be given at a later time with more information available.

After discussions, it was moved by the Chairman and **RESOLVED** that:

- This information be **NOTED**.



18.20 VICTORY HALL RESPONSIBILITIES

Members were advised that when the Parish Council undertakes the administrative and managerial responsibilities for Victory Hall a variety of matters should be pre-emptively considered. Members were informed that there would be no requirement for costs to be shared with the Members Club for a waste contract as the Council had their own arrangements. The RFO confirmed that users of the Victory Hall would be required to remove their own waste as a condition of letting and a £100 deposit would be held against this. Councillor Alvin stated that a period of notice would need to be given to the Members' Club regarding this change.

The RFO stated that there were two employees of the Lewis Foundation – a gardener and a cleaner. Both were paid cash-in-hand and had no formal contract of employment. The gardener had already been contacted and told his services would no longer be required as the Council had their own staff who would deal with the grounds' maintenance. The cleaner was employed for 15 hours a week at a cost of £100. The RFO was still awaiting confirmation from the cleaner that she wished to continue in her employment, as she would now need to be dealt with as an employee of the Council with all the legal obligations that would involve. The RFO further stated that access arrangements were being looked at as many keys had been issued in the past to the front door, and quotes would be obtained for a smart lock.

Councillor Alvin stated that a large amount of storage space was taken up by the amateur dramatic society, and they would have to understand that the change in management of the hall would mean that they would either have to pay for this storage or remove the accumulated items.

Councillor Hodds stated she was concerned about the poor lighting in the area around the hall.

After further discussions, it was moved by the Chairman and **RESOLVED** that:

- This information be **NOTED**.

18.21 STAFFING ARRANGEMENT

Members were advised that during the tenure of the Lewis Memorial and Victory Hall Foundation this community asset was frequently utilised at times external to regular office hours, if it is intended to continue this policy of operation, when the council assumes administrative responsibility of Victory Hall an appropriate staffing arrangement will have to be considered and implemented, by this committee.

After a brief discussion, it was moved by the Chairman and **RESOLVED** that:

- This matter be deferred to the next meeting.



18.22 MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT FORWARD TO THE NEXT VICTORY HALL COMMITTEE MEETING

After discussions, it was moved by the Chairman and **RESOLVED** that the following matters be brought forward to the next meeting;

- Detailed costings would be brought to the meeting covering the general area of resources required for the running of the hall.

18.23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was **AGREED** that the next meeting of this Committee would be held within the first week of the transfer of management of the hall i.e. after the Easter break, the working week commencing Tuesday 23rd April and would be scheduled at a time to allow a site visit to the hall to take place.

18.24 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

The public and the press be excluded from the meeting, the Council believing that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed.

This motion was moved by the Chairman and resolved that:

- It was **APPROVED**

18.24 CHIGWELL MEMBERS' CLUB LEASE

Members were advised that resolution was made by the Parish Council to enter into a new lease agreement with the Chigwell Members' Club to occupy the Victory Hall. This arrangement will allow the uninterrupted continuance of business at this establishment. Councillor Alvin stated that in addition to what had already been said, the lease would make clear for the first time that the Members Club had no automatic right to use of the car park, but should spaces be available, they were at liberty to use them – they were not allocated a set number or location of spaces. In addition, the lease would include a requirement to comply with all Health and Safety requirements and a provision for the Council to inspect the premises to ensure this was being complied with.

Councillor Hodds stated that the lines in the car park were not all visible.

Councillor Alvin confirmed that discussions had been had about this due to the installation of the new gate to the land at the rear and this was a matter to be progressed. Councillor Alvin also confirmed that although £30,000 had been set aside for the possibility of compensation for not renewing the lease, that maximum exposure of the Council would only be half this amount, as the Members Club would be given a lease.



At this time, there had been no communication from the Lewis Foundation regarding the issue of a compensation claim, and if there were, then the Dilapidations Report obtained would need to be considered for the legal responsibility for putting right issues identified in that report relating to the maintenance of the building.

Councillor Lion stated that he believed the option to continue the management of the Victory Hall under a trust was the best option. The RFO explained that advice had been received from the Council's internal auditors that the establishment of a trust to run the Victory Hall had merit, there were some disadvantages in terms of officer time to ensure accounts were kept entirely separate, and the time spent on work for the trust would have to be dealt with separately as well, however, on balance it was a good idea. Details of the process involved in setting up a Trust, would be placed before Council at a future meeting to allow this option to be considered.

After further discussions, it was moved by the Chairman and **RESOLVED** that:

- This information be **NOTED**.

18.25 CHIGWELL MEMBERS' CLUB LEASE/HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Members were reminded of the resolution made by the Parish Council to enter into a new lease agreement with the Chigwell Members' Club, to not renew the existing lease with the Lewis Foundation, and to assume all administrative/managerial responsibilities for the Victory Hall.

Members were further reminded that on 20th November 2018, an internal and external inspection of Victory Hall was conducted by selected professional service providers. Consequentially, a schedule of dilapidations and wants of repair found to have accrued at the property, under the terms of the lease, was produced and presented to the council for consideration. This inspection report and a supplementary electrical installation condition report was considered by the council at the meeting held on 13th December 2018. At this meeting all the aforementioned resolutions were approved by the council, as these arrangements would allow an uninterrupted continuance of services at Victory Hall and the Chigwell Members' Club.

Members were advised that a Fire Risk Assessment had been completed regarding the Victory Hall, which made a number of recommendations, including the installation of a fire alarm. The RFO was in the process of obtaining quotes for a basic fire alarm, which would satisfy the minimum requirements. The fire alarm system would be reviewed on an urgent basis and these quotes will be brought before the committee at a future meeting for consideration.

Councillor Lion raised the issue of the library, in connection with the future use of the Victory Hall and suggested there might be potential for some of the activities conducted there to transfer to the Victory Hall. There might even be an option for part of the Hall to be used as a replacement library.

Councillor Alvin stated that the Council should consider the possibility of sec 106 monies from developers being used for the future development of a hub on the site.

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It was suggested that an approach might be made to Essex County Council for the purchase of the library site, based upon a non-commercial redevelopment, particularly if a trust was managing the Victory Hall as this might allow other sums of money to be sought that would not be open to the Council.

After further discussions, it was moved by the Chairman and **RESOLVED** that:

- This information be **NOTED**.

The meeting finished at 7.45 pm

Signed

Chairman

Date