

	<i>Meeting (No)</i>	<b>Market &amp; Town Hall Committee (1)</b>	
	<i>Date</i>	<b>17<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>	
	<i>Document</i>		
	<b>Market &amp; Town Hall Manager's Report</b>	<i>Ref No</i>	<b>MTH1/10</b>

### **Neston Market**

The Easter Market was very busy, despite the cold and rain. It was delivered under the requested £550 budget at £475.60 which included free activities and a visit from the Easter Bunny. The Easter Trail was also popular with 122 children taking part. Councillors did receive a couple of comments regarding the lack of musical entertainment, however as previously notified, we no longer have space for entertainment due to the number of traders regularly attending the market. This must be seen as a positive for the market as a whole.

Although we didn't hold a VE Day Market as such, we did make a decision to put up some bunting and flags on the market square to mark the occasion, a few traders joined in by having bunting on their stalls and I purchased a CD of music 'of the time' which was played by our Cllrs on the charity bookstall. The VE day flag was also flown on the Town Hall flag pole as approved by C&E Committee.

### **Market 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Task & Finish Group**

The group held their first meeting on 1.5.25. and discussed a number of ideas which are now being investigated further. It was agreed to request that the RFO earmarks £3000 for this event over the next few years and that the event itself will be held in place of the summer market in 2028.

### **Additional Committee meeting planned for 13.5.25**

A decision was made to cancel this additional meeting as there were no further updates available at the time.

### **Waste Collection**

Due to an increase in charges, we have now moved our 'general waste' collection to fortnightly, the same as our 'mixed recycling' collection. This will keep the monthly increase down to approximately £12, instead of £24.

I am in the process of looking at the new regulations that came into place in March 2025 for businesses with over 10 full time employees. Although these regulations will not affect the Town Council until March 2027 its best for us to be prepared and if possible, start the new collection arrangements sooner rather than later.

### **Town Hall Hire**

I met with the Manager of Neston Recreation Centre, Brio Leisure, on 10.6.25 regarding the use of the Town Hall for various keep fit or exercise classes during the day. He is looking to bring classes to more accessible venues in the Town Centre and we discussed some ideas. I am keen to carry this forward and will keep the committee updated on progress.

### **Town Hall Hire Risk Assessments**

As discussed at the meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> April, a risk assessment is required from any hirer wishing to hold an event that is open to members of the public. This requirement has always been included as a condition on the hirer's application form, and hirers sign to say that they have undertaken a risk assessment for their event. It would not be appropriate to have generic risk assessments for events as it is the responsibility of the hirer to assess any risks depending on the nature of their event, this is for safety reasons and in order that they are aware of any risks and that they consider ways to mitigate these risks themselves. Also providing generic risk assessments would result in the liability falling to the Council.

In the past I have tried to assist by verbally suggesting risks or areas that they may wish to consider. However, as requested at the last meeting, I have now put together a written list which will be given to hirers that may need assistance with preparing their risk assessment.

### **Town Hall & Market Square maintenance issues**

The Caretaker and Market Officer has replaced most of the faulty electrical sockets on the market square. The remainder will be done over the coming months. He has fitted some additional automatic doorguards to some internal doors and doorstays to other doors, both of these measures will help improve the accessibility of the building and will also prevent hirers from wedging fire doors open.

I have reported the loose plaster on the ceiling of the main hall, caused by an old roof leak, to the Equans help desk on a number of occasions. This repair should have been included in the recent roof works. The damage was noticed recently by a contractor, visiting for another matter, and reported back to the Equans Project Manager. This seems to have escalated the issue and a company have been sent out to inspect and quote for the repair, we have been advised to cordon off the area until the repair is carried out as the plaster may fall imminently.

The Chief Officer has been in touch with the Equans Property Manager about the unsuitability of the new platform lift that has been fitted on the steps in the reception area. The Lift company and the contractors that fitted the lift have met on site with the Chief Officer and myself to discuss alternatives, which may involve moving the middle wooden doors in reception to allow for a bigger lift platform. Quotes are being sent to the Equans Property Manager and we await a further update.

I have also contacted the Property Department at CWaC again regarding the annual deep clean of the market square, as detailed in the Asset Management Agreement. The last time a clean was carried out was pre covid. I have been advised by the Property Manager that this is being looked into, I will keep the committee updated with any progress.

### **Meeting with CWaC Property Team**

The CO, RFO and I met with members of the CWaC property team on 3<sup>rd</sup> June regarding Town Hall maintenance issues under the £1,500 threshold. I am now no longer able to

log any work with the CWaC/Equans help desk if it is expected to be under £1,500, without cost implications falling on the Town Council. After discussion the following measures were agreed:

- Our C&MO will continue to carry out minor jobs as he is able.
- For any work/purchases expected to cost over £100 I need to obtain 3 estimates (which can include online prices).
- For any work over £1,000 I will need to obtain 3 quotations, as per the Council's Financial Regulations.
- Best value for money must be a consideration at all times.
- If quotes are received over £1,500 then the job will be sent to the CWaC/Equans help desk/property services to be logged for them to arrange the works and pay the costs.
- All work under £1,500 will be paid for by ourselves, which may stretch this year's allocated responsive maintenance budget.

As a result of this, I have pulled together a list of the outstanding/uncompleted works that had previously been logged with Equans and are considered to be ongoing. I await an update on the status of these works from property services.

### **Market Square Bollards**

There is no further update regarding the repair of the Brook Street entrance bollards. This outstanding work is included on the list sent to property services. The Property Manager has stated that an alternative solution may need to be sought for cost-saving purposes. Emergency vehicle access requirements will need to be taken into consideration which has been raised.

### **Free room hire (Minute 10b M&TH 27.6.23)**

Free room hire was given to Neston Karate for their annual charity fundraising evening on 14<sup>th</sup> May, following approval from The Chair. They raised a fantastic £493.55 for North West Air Ambulance on the evening.

### **Reduced Pitch Fees (Minute 10a M&TH 27.6.23)**

The maximum agreed figure of £200 per quarter for free or reduced pitch fees, to community or charitable organisations where there is community benefit, has not been exceeded.

### **Equals card expenditure**

The total expenditure for the Equals card from 1.3.25 to 31.5.25 was £921.40 This includes the purchase of a video doorbell for the community office, wood stain and brushes, etc. for the upkeep of the new market square handrails, a circular saw and ID badges/lanyards for all Councillors which were distributed at the Annual Council meeting.

### **Exceptions – Town Hall Lift Maintenance (Minute 67 M&TH 13.2.24)**

There is no further update to the work to fit the GSM & safe line installation to the lift up to the first floor. This is again included on the list of outstanding work sent to property services.

**Delegated Authority** - There are no delegated authority actions to report.

**Nicky McMahon**  
**Market & Town Hall Manager**