

	Meeting (No)	Market & Town Hall Committee (3)
	Date	27th September 2022
	Document	Ref No
	Town Hall - Disabled Access	MTH3/39

Background

The Town Hall belongs to CWaC and is currently managed by Neston Town Council (NTC). NTC commissioned and paid for two independent occupational health assessment in 2020 & 2021. The reports highlight and make recommendation that improvements be made to the front and back entrance and exit doors of the town hall.

Current Status

The doors to the front of the building are heavy and those with mobility issues have some difficulty opening these. Our caretaker has recently replaced both the top and bottom bolts of the front door both to make them more secure and easier to use.

There is a sloped ramp at the side of the building (Police entrance) which can be used by disabled people, but unsuitable for those who use disability scooters, due to the necessary turning circle.

The back door entrance cannot be accessed by those using a mobility scooter, as there is insufficient space. In the interest of building security, the back doors remain locked. For those who are physically disabled and use aids, both doors have to be opened and held open whilst they navigate their entrance and exit.

The Town Hall is used by CWaC as a Polling station.

At this time the front of the building and the side entrance are made available to all users. For those with mobility issues using the front door entrance, have to then access the Hall via a mobile platform lift. The lift cannot be called without assistance from the top of the stairs and the lift frequently fails. The lift cannot support a mobility scooter.

Actions Taken

At NTC Councillors request, the issues were logged with Qwest/Engie/Equans in January 2021, and again in September 2021. After a follow-up a contractor called to provide quotes and another to visited to complete a survey. No reports or updates have been received.

In June 2022, further contact was made with CWaC Officers, to highlight the issues (as listed above). In July 2022, the CWaC Head of Property Services was invited to visit the Town Hall. He advised that there are no plans or financial provision in the current year to make alterations to the Town Hall, the funds were fully allocated, and would wish to know the Council's interest in the Town Hall and its short, medium and long-term plans for the building prior to his visit. He advised that should NTC be in a position to fund alterations, then these could probably be undertaken via a Licence to Alter. A request to advise if NTC wished CWaC to establish a business case for the funding of the works, was made. This is now tabled for consideration at committee.

Other Information

NTC have drafted a draft corporate strategy in which if approved, aims to empower our residents with disabilities.

At the CWAC meeting on 14th July, CWAC passes a motion on the UN Convention on the Rights of People with disabilities: https://cheshirewestandchester.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/677461/start_time/5395000?force_language_code=en_GB

At its meeting 26.07.2022, NTC received a request to consider if they are able to supply a DDI office space at the Town Hall in order that a fundamental service could be offered to NTC residents. The mobilities faced by Town Hall users were outlined. NTC wish to fully support the community and offer their Town Hall facilities.

CWaC Cllr Millar requested and has been sent a copy of this report.

Summary

Market and Town Hall committee at their meeting 27.09.2022 are to consider what if any further action is to be taken in respect of Town Hall access issues for users with mobility issues.

A Kunaj
Council Manager