

	Meeting (No)	FC 6 23/24	
	Date	23 rd January 2023	
	Document	Ref No	
	Town Hall Lift Maintenance Update	FC76	

On 30th November 2023, a staff member became trapped in the rear lift due to a malfunction. Fortunately, at the time of this incident, Neston Town Council's caretaker was on hand to assist and manually cranked the lift down to ground level to ensure that the door could be opened.

The rear lift has malfunctioned a number of times over, usually when the door has been opened prematurely. However, in November, this was the first time the lift had become stuck before it had actually reached the bottom. The rear lift is not currently fitted with a callout device. Without an emergency callout device function, any user is unable to attract attention when inside the lift, should they be without a mobile phone on their person or personal lone worker alarm. Since this incident, steps have been taken to mitigate the risk to both staff and hirers of the Town Hall. All hirers have been contacted to request that if they are utilising the building on their own to keep a mobile phone on their person, particularly when using the rear lift. Signs have also been posted on both the first floor and ground floor lift entrances to remind users of this. A key safe has been secured to an outside wall to ensure that in the event of a person becoming trapped their rescuer can enter the building.

Engineers carry out monthly maintenance inspections on the building's lifts. Insurers sent to inspect the premises by CW&C have also reported the urgent need for a communication device in the lifts on several occasions. The additional lift in the Town Hall which travels up to the first floor (CO & police area) is not fitted with a callout function either, however, this lift is of a hydraulic function, which is more reliable, and this lift rarely used.

During talks with the Property Services Team at Cheshire West & Chester Council, the following update was highlighted:

"With regards to the lift issue, you raised I have consulted with our Facilities lead as well as Qwest. Qwest are going to provide us with a list of breakdowns to the lift that you have mentioned so that we can check that any actions or recommendations have been considered.

In addition, the replacement of the lift was discussed with our Strategic Building & Facilities Manager along with our Property lead that feed into the Capital Programme that would be the funding source for this type of activity. The feedback that we have currently is that the budget would not be able to provide the funding due to the oversubscription and backlog of priority works.

The potential for a communication device to be fitted to the lift would need to be consulted on further but the feasibility and approval would not be automatic."

The advice received has already been followed, prior to the Christmas break:

"In the meantime, your risk assessments, lone working policy and PEEP should be updated to include sufficient detail to mitigate any risk to yourselves and other visitors to the building when working alone or in an isolated area of the building should the lift fail.

The PEEP should have a failsafe system of evacuation in the event of fire conditions which would include a portable communication device (either a mobile phone with sufficient charge and credit, or a Guardian Alert-it type device to call for assistance). These two items should be updated at your earliest convenience."

The most recent update from Cheshire West confirmed that there is no funding to replace the rear Town Hall lift. CW&C has not been able to provide a timeframe, or indeed a confirmation, as to whether a callout device will be fitted in the interim.

One quotation has since been submitted from the unitary Council's maintenance contractor for the call out function to be added which is in the region of £1,000. It has not yet been made clear whether or not the work to fit a callout device will be undertaken by CW&C Council as the building owners.

Members are reminded that the upper maintenance limit that Neston Town Council is expected to undertake to the Town Hall, as per the Asset Management Agreement, is £1,500.

A meeting with CW&C Council's Property Services team is scheduled for 18th January 2024 to discuss this and other matters affecting the operation of the Town Hall. The Locum Chief Officer will report any further updates at the Full Council meeting on 23rd January 2024.

Zoë Dean

Locum Chief Officer

16th January 2024