

	<i>Meeting (No)</i>	Market & Town Hall Committee (5)	
	<i>Date</i>	1st April 2025	
	<i>Document</i>		
	Market & Town Hall Manager's Report	<i>Ref No</i>	MTH5/64

Friday Market

The market is back to full strength after the usual post-Christmas lull, and bad weather, when many traders take their allocated leave. We have had a few new traders join us and we are in the fortunate position of having a full market on most weeks. We also have a regular 'pool' of casual traders who join us when space allows. This does mean that we no longer have space to arrange musical entertainment. In some respects, this does reduce 'complaints' from some traders who found that spectators watching entertainment blocked access to their stalls, or made it difficult for them to hear their customers, therefore affecting trade. However, it is unfortunate that we are not able to have the atmosphere that music creates on the market. Neston Town Council should remain mindful that traders need to be prioritised, and that they are primarily markets, not events, with activities organised to enhance the regular offering.

Market 300th Anniversary Task & Finish Group

This group has not yet met, mainly due to the Market & Town Hall Manager's absence. A meeting will now be arranged to take place after Easter.

Town Hall Hire

Town Hall hire continues to be good; we have additional antiques and craft fairs booked, together with theatre performances and some private parties. We now have bookings on all evenings during term time.

The music licence has now been updated and arranged for the coming year.

Town Hall Hire Enquiry and Feedback

I recently received an email enquiry for an event from one of our councillors. Having firstly tried to establish whether the event would be private or open to the public, I indicated that public liability insurance and a risk assessment *may* be required if the event was open to the public. This is to protect the Town Council against any indemnity claims and as per advice received by our insurers. I gave brief details of the building's limitations and offered to discuss the booking further to find the best solution for the event. Having received no further communication, it was presumed plans had changed. Some feedback has since been provided on behalf of the group who were looking for local room hire for a ceilidh event later in the year, including comparison with a number of other local venues. It appears that the two other local venues approached do not request copies of public liability insurance or a risk assessment, which is surprising. However, if they had been given details to indicate it was a private event then understandable.

Neston Town Council completed its own research when determining room hire rates and these are comparable to other local venues; we have ample parking nearby, just not adjacent. We are not currently able to provide out of hours caretaking due to part-

time working patterns, or bar facilities because the premises is not licenced. However, hirers can bring in their own alcohol into the venue for personal consumption but it *cannot* be sold.

The feedback provided from the local group is as follows:

Town Hall booking

The quote for booking the Town Hall was £20 per hour and £12 per hour for the kitchen. There is no alcohol licence and caretaking is not included. There is a requirement for the hirer to present a risk assessment and public liability insurance. There are parts of the building which are not secure, and the public could gain access to. Car parking is nearby but not adjacent to the hall.

Below is a table which gives a summary of the feedback provided:

Venue	Parking	Bar facilities	Cost	Caretaking	PL Insurance & RA
Town Hall	Close by	Not currently provided	Main Hall £20ph (kitchen extra <u>IF</u> required and appliances used)	Not currently provided	Required for <u>events open to the public</u>
B	Small car park	Small bar in cramped corner, beer not to taste of expected clientele	Not quoted at time of enquiry	Not mentioned in feedback	Not requested
C	Car Park adjacent	Yes, buys in according to hirers needs	£20ph for building	Not mentioned in feedback	Not requested

Taking the feedback into consideration and the fact that I aim to discuss potential bookings with hirers to find the most suitable terms and arrangements of hire based on the type of event, I would conclude that Neston Town Council offers competitive hire with the required safety aspects taken into consideration for **public events**. Bar facilities would be preferable and this is something that I am looking into and that will be taken into consideration in the Town Hall Business Plan.

Town Hall Roof Work

The roof work, including the flat roofs work, is now nearing completion and we hope the remaining scaffolding will be taken down on 26.3.25. Following that the contractors expect to be back on site in 6 to 8 weeks to install the 2 new skylights on the first floor, police office and landing.

Town Hall Back Door

Our Caretaker has been looking at ways to keep the back door secured open for disabled access, as requested at the last meeting, and has managed to find a solution.

Market Square Handrails

The market square handrails have now been fitted and are looking great. The fitting was achieved in one day, when we were originally quoted for 2 days work. Therefore, the final invoice total came in well under budget.

Our caretaker will apply an additional coat of wood stain, to protect the timber, in the near future.

Market Square Bollards

There is no further update regarding the repair of the Brook Street entrance bollards.

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

No free room hire has been provided since the last scheduled meeting.

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

A 25% reduction to fees was applied to the few traders attending the market on 21.2.25 in the high winds, as agreed with the committee chair.

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 1.2.25 to 28.2.25 was £498.28. This includes the purchase of crockery, a video doorbell for the back door and automatic door closers for some fire doors.

**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.

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

Nicky McMahon
Market & Town Hall Manager