

COLNE TOWN COUNCIL ITEM 12

REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL



From	The Finance, Employment & Services Committee
Tel No	01282 861888
Email	g.langley@colnetowncouncil.org.uk
Date	6th February 2024
Subject	Equipment Storage

PURPOSE:

1. To inform the Council that, as we have had to remove our event kit from the garages at the back of the market, and the Town Hall does not have adequate storage space, Council Officers have identified two units that have come available for the Town Council to rent.
2. To gain authorisation from the Council for the Chairman of the Council and the Town Clerk to sign the relevant paperwork.

BACKGROUND:

3. As the Town Council is evolving and the events are becoming larger due to increased footfall, the Town Council now has considerably more tools and equipment than it has done before.
4. The introduction of the Lengthsmen has led to tools and equipment being purchased to allow jobs to be undertaken in-house. Whilst saving the Council money, this does pose its own storage problems.
5. As Events are becoming larger and very well attended, the Town Council has been investing in additional events equipment, things such as sound and lighting, character costumes, crowd barriers and traffic barriers, to help reduce increasing hire costs.
6. The Town Council owns 20 gazebos, which it does hire out from time to time. The gazebos, along with the sides, ratchet straps and weights were originally being held by our Grounds Maintenance Contractor at the time. However, since the former did not regain the maintenance rights in the last Tender Process, the Town Council has had to find an alternative location to store them.
7. Up until very recently, the Gazebo equipment and event barriers have been stored in three garages that the Town Council was renting from Pendle Borough Council, at a nominal cost, that are situated at the back of the market.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

8. Due to the impending market regeneration, the garages at the back will be demolished, so Officers have had to move all the kit to the Town Hall for the time being.

9. This is causing access and safety issues, with equipment being dotted around the Town Hall and blocking the basement and ground floor corridors.
10. Officers have considered additional containers at Primet, however these are not suitable due to damp conditions. Indeed, we are having to look into finding a cost-effective way to insulate and ventilate the containers that we currently have, so this is not considered to be a viable option.
11. Given that Members are wanting Officers to make more use of the Town Hall, in terms of Community Groups and events, it is getting increasingly more difficult to maintain a secure and safe environment.
12. On investigation, it was found that secure units of an adequate size can range anywhere from £6,600 to £13,000 per annum.
13. Due to the health and safety risks and the urgency to find a suitable location quickly, authorisation was given by the FES Committee for the Town Clerk/RFO to proceed with procuring a suitable storage space for the Town Council to rent.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

14. The Town Clerk/RFO and Deputy Clerk have managed to provisionally secure two units of suitable size that are within 0.2 miles of the Town Hall. Access is 24/7 and there is an external shutter to the building, as well as internal shutters to each unit. Vehicle access is also available, allowing for easy loading and unloading.
15. The combined rental for both units equates to £8,220 per annum. A five-year term has been agreed, along with a 3% increase in the rent each year, thus ensuring that the rent will not increase more than 15% within the lease period.
16. It was also agreed during the last Committee meeting that, if the additional costs cannot be found within the main revenue budget for 2023/24, the required funding will be taken from the Town Hall Earmarked Reserve. (It is felt that the required expenditure for 2024/25 can easily be found by realigning the agreed revenue budget for next year.)

RECOMMENDATION:

17. That Members give authorisation for the Town Clerk/RFO and the Chairman of Colne Town Council to sign the relevant leases.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

18. To ensure a safe and secure environment for all users of the Town Hall building.
19. With the increased likelihood of transfer of services from the Borough Council, it is envisaged that the storage issues will only be compounded in future years.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS:

20. The Town Council have lost their current storage facilities and need to find an alternative solution going forward.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

21. If tools and equipment are constantly being moved around, there is more likelihood of damage in transit and the Town Council has a duty to protect and maintain the assets that it owns.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION:

22. Various online Letting Agents, the Lengthsmen and Officers of the Council.

SUPPORTING PAPERS:

- None

FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT: Gina Langley