



28th January 2025

The meeting of the **TOWN HALL COMMITTEE** will be held in the **KIDDERMINSTER ROOM, WYRE FOREST HOUSE** on **WEDNESDAY 29TH JANUARY 2025** at **6:00PM** when Members are summoned to attend.

Yours sincerely,

Matt Smith
Town Hall Manager

TOWN HALL COMMITTEE AGENDA – Wednesday 29th January 2025

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of interest

To receive declarations from members regarding the items under consideration on this agenda in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 s32 and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

Members are reminded that should you declare a pecuniary interest at a meeting, it is your responsibility to inform the Monitoring officer.

3. Public Question Time

In accordance with Standing Order 3(c), to allow members of the public to make representations, ask questions, and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.

4. Minutes (Appendix 1)

To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Town Hall Committee held on Monday 16th December 2024.

5. Food & Beverage Expressions of Interests – Summary & Recommendations (Appendix 2)

To receive a report detailing the summary and recommendations following the food and beverage EOs.

6. Hire Charges Report (Appendix 3)

To receive a report and recommendations for the Pricing Policy.

**KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN HALL COMMITTEE**

APPENDIX 1

**Minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2024 at 6pm
in the Kidderminster Room, Wyre Forest House**

Present:

Councillors:

J. Beckingham (Chair)

D. Hine

G. Connolly (Substitute for Cllr. B.Brookes)

F. Oborski MBE

In Attendance:

Town Hall Manager

Annie Wills – FMG Consultant

Absent:

Cllr Liam Carroll

Cllr Bernadette Connor

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Nil.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Nil

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Town Hall Committee held on Monday 9th September 2024.

5. REOPENING THE TOWN HALL (APPENDIX 2)

Members received an update from the business consultant on expressions of interest from catering providers and the potential business model for the future operations of the Town Hall.

It was discussed that The Town Hall Manager and Business Consultant shall report to members in the new year following on from site visits with interested parties.

6. TOWN HALL TRANSFORMATION PROJECT (APPENDIX 3)

Members received an update on the Town Hall Construction Programme from the Town Hall Manager.

7. TOWN HALL BUDGET 25-26 (APPENDIX 4)

Members received a proposed Town Hall Budget for 2025-2026.

8. NLHF – A JOURNEY THROUGH KIDDERMINSTER’S TOWN HALL (APPENDIX 5)

Members received an update on the NLHF – A Journey Through Kidderminster’s Town Hall Project from the Town Hall Manager.

9. PODIUM – AMENDED DESIGN (APPENDIX 6)

Members received a proposal for an amended podium design. A councillor questioned whether a handrail could be installed on the slope of the podium. The Town Hall Manager confirmed he would take this up with the architect.

RESOLVED:

Members of the committee approved Option 5 of the Podium Design.

10. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME (APPENDIX 7)

Members noted and agreed the Forward Work Programme.

Meeting closed at 18:40

KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL**COUNCIL MEETING**29TH January 2025**REPORT TO COUNCIL****EXPRESSION OF INTEREST SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS****AIM**

To provide an update to the Council on the Expression of Interest process for managing the Café, Courtyard Bar, and other venue bars, along with recommendations for appointing preferred operators.

BACKGROUND

With the refurbishment nearing completion, it is crucial to define the customer journey and operational functionality of the café and bars, focusing on connectivity and service delivery. All potential operators who visited the site expressed their understanding of the vision and were impressed.

Key findings from this process include:

- The Café and Courtyard Bar require one operator due to shared back-of-house space, offering flexibility for both daytime and evening operations.
- The Courtyard space is recognized as a destination in its own right, attracting its own audience and generating footfall into the Town Hall through its connection to the box office. It can also serve as a pre-venue drink or supper area.
- The Courtyard Bar can be used occasionally as a VIP area for events in the Music Hall or to support activities within the Town Hall but is not suitable as the primary bar for events.

Consideration was given to running the bars in-house. However, while potentially lucrative, this option would require Council investment in infrastructure, additional staffing, and assumption of business risk. Passing this risk to the private sector through a short-term agreement with an external operator is recommended. This approach allows flexibility and income generation while minimizing risk. Furthermore, outsourcing the event bars for a short-term agreement provides the Council with the option to bring them back in-house in the future, should the Council develop the confidence and resources to manage them effectively.

DISCUSSION/COMMENT

Meetings with potential operators have been conducted, and proposals have been evaluated. The following operators are considered the most suitable for different aspects of the venue:

1. **Savva Bars (www.savvabarscompany.co.uk)**
 - Well-established local operator with extensive bar management experience.
 - Offers tailored bar solutions, including mobile and portable options, ideal for diverse events.
 - Proposes a 10% commission on gross sales and a one-year rolling agreement.

- Willing to agree to a Service Level Agreement (SLA) to ensure service standards.

2. **Gather & Gather (www.chsndcogroup.com)**

- Part of CH&CO, with experience in high-profile venues such as the Old Royal Naval College in London.
- Proposes a flexible café space featuring locally sourced produce, deli and bakery offerings, and a curated menu with health-conscious options.
- Offers investment in the café and commission on turnover.

3. **Thomas Franks (www.thomasfranks.com)**

- Family-owned contract catering company specializing in chef-led, locally sourced catering.
- Operates sites across the UK, including Somerset Cricket Club.
- Proposes investment in the café and offers commission on turnover.

4. **Plyvine**

- Recommended as the preferred caterer for Weddings and Large Catering Events.

Each of these operators demonstrated alignment with the Council's vision for providing exceptional service, flexibility, and community engagement.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Council is advised to resolve the following:

- Approve Savva Bars as the preferred operator for the KTH bars.
- Approve the continuation of discussions with both operators as not able to determine the preferred operator at this stage . Either Gather & Gather or Thomas Franks will be the preferred operator for the Café and Courtyard.
- Approve Plyvine as the preferred caterer for Weddings and Large Catering Events.
- Authorize discussions to agree on Heads of Terms (HoT) with the preferred operators, followed by a further report to Council.
- Appoint the operators via a concession agreement, ensuring compliance with transparent and fair procedures.

The concession agreement would include an SLA covering:

- Opening times and staffing levels.
- Sustainability measures (e.g., crockery, disposables, single-use plastics).
- Complaint resolution timelines.
- Mechanisms for default notices and termination.
- Use of local labour.

FINANCIALS

The recommended approach minimizes financial risk to the Council while generating income through a profit-share model based on turnover. This aligns with the Council's strategy for

sustainable and efficient venue management. The inclusion of operator investments further reduces upfront costs for the Council, ensuring a financially viable operation.

TIMELINE / NEXT STEPS

Key Milestones:

- **16 December 2024:** Update report to Council.
- **21 December 2024:** Arrange site visits and one-to-one meetings with bidders.
- **16–21 January 2025:** Conduct site meetings.
- **23 January 2025:** Discuss proposals with bidders and prepare recommendations.
- **27–28 January 2025:** Present recommendations to Council.
- **31 January 2025 (tentative):** Confirm preferred operators.
- **Mid/End February 2025:** Prepare Heads of Terms and report back to Council.
- **End March 2025:** Finalize and agree contracts with operators.

SUMMARY

The potential operator meetings have been highly promising, with proposals aligned to the Council’s vision for a vibrant and sustainable Town Hall. Engaging the proposed operators is expected to enhance the vibrancy and sustainability of the Town Hall, benefiting the community and ensuring long-term success. The outlined approach balances financial prudence with operational excellence, providing a robust foundation for the Town Hall’s future.

Update to Council

Hire Charge Policy for Kidderminster Town Hall

Context

Prior to closing the hire charge policy was complicated and confusing. The revised hire charge document will streamline the charges allowing for a clear and transparent charge structure. Wedding bookings have been lifted from the document and will have a separate booking procedure with a glossy flyer appropriate to the occasion.

The option to hire technical support and concert packages continues as an optional extra and currently not mandatory, however this may change as we get further into the development stages of the project.

RECOMMENDATION: All ticketed events must use KTH box office and must use our preferred contractors for bar and catering.

Not for Profit V Profit Bookings

Status of bookings is always a grey area and can be complicated for KTH staff to determine which category an event falls into, to make it fairer for all it is proposed that the hire charges are split into Peak & Off Peak – therefore the timing of the event determines the hire rate. For example, a not-for-profit organisation can book a peak rate and pay accordingly. Conversely a Profit (commercial) booking can only book peak rates, in summary the peak rate applies for all commercial bookings. This is a standard pricing structure and avoids ambiguity. Furthermore, it allows for flexibility for the hirer to book any space at any time but to be charged the appropriate rate for the space.

RECOMMENDATION: Peak and Off-Peak charges are to be applied as detailed above.

Historical Bookings

When a venue reopens after significant refurbishment there is always the challenge of how to approach previous hirers. On one hand its great to welcome back previous performers who will have an already established following (audience) balanced with the need to consider increasing hire charges. Below are options on how to progress this.

- a) Incremental increases for previous bookings 'Opening Offer for Repeat Business' Honour previous rates for bookings between September and March 2026. Incremental increase over 2026/2027 to achieve advertised rates.
- b) Take a hard stand now and apply new rates to all bookings regardless of previous booking history.
- c) Allocate a subvention budget to offset hire charges for historical bookings.
- d) Introduce an additional hire rate, there would be peak, off peak and a loyalty rate which would be costed at between peak and off peak and would only be available to historical bookings.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt incremental increases for historical bookings: Option A is recommended, allowing for gradual increases over time for bookings between September and March 2026, transitioning to the advertised rates by 2027.

Charitable Bookings

There would only be an off peak and a peak rate, charities would be charged the off-peak rate if they book the off-peak timings. This allows flexibility for all spaces to be available for all to hire, however the cost will be relevant to the saleability of the space. Charities have the option of booking off-peak space at the reduced rate or peak space at the higher rate. All commercial hires will be charged at peak space rates.

RECOMMENDATION: Peak and Off-Peak charges for commercial and charitable bookings are to be applied as detailed above.

Hire Charge Structure

The next steps are to produce a hire charge structure that implements a clear, peak-off-peak pricing system to ensure transparency for all hirers.

The proposed rates will be based on achievable previous rates, alongside market testing what competitors charge. It is proposed that the hire charges are reviewed after 6 months.