

Old Market Hall toilets /Competent Person requirements

Summary

Councillors have identified the urgent need to upgrade the Old Market Hall toilets. However, there was also a request at the November Town Council meeting for a report on the Council's Competent Person requirements on property maintenance.

Recommendation

To consider improvements to the Old Market Hall toilets, noting the Competent Person requirements on property maintenance.

Background

Two and a half years ago, the Town Council took on the running of the Old Market Hall as tenants of the Digby Trust, through estate agents, Fisher German. Now the lease has been transferred to the Council, its councillors have identified the urgent need to improve the Old Market Hall and, in particular, the upgrade of the gents, ladies and disabled toilets.

In contacting redecorating contractors, it has become clear that certain necessary building checks had not taken place at the building in the past. At the November Town Council meeting, there was a request for a report on the property maintenance legal obligations for public buildings and any Council's requirements to appoint a Competent Person.

Appendix 3a is a summary of the situation. In short, the Competent Person could be an employee or someone from outside the organisation. There is not one single checklist but a series of legal obligations, depending on the operations taken out in each building.

Having investigated the requirements for the Old Market Hall, the Town Clerk has put together a summary table (see Appendix 3b) with legally required one-off or set-interval audit and inspection routines (and who it might engage for these) and another column for regular maintenance and review of these areas (and contractors used).

To move forward with the toilet upgrade at the Old Market Hall, firstly the roof leak needs to be fixed. It is hoped that might be done by the date of this meeting. Then, the audit /inspection certificates are required for:

Asbestos survey and certification
Electrical Installation Condition Report
Legionella checks procedures

Agents for all three series of checks have been commissioned and reports are either completed or due shortly. Members have been sent details of two contractors who are prepared to undertake the toilet repairs, once all the above checks have been completed.

Finance and Value for Money

One quotation received for toilet upgrade was for £ 32,724.20 for the 3 toilet rooms (from a supplier known to Cllr Tomkinson) but this was to be increased by the cost of preparatory electrical works. Another quotation, from Cartwrights of Nuneaton, at £24,265, included all preliminary works. Cartwrights has undertaken one small piece of work for the Town Council but is used a lot by North Warks Borough Council.

It is hoped that Cartwright could complete the work in the 23/24 financial year, while there is an unspent capital fund amount to cover the work.

Risk Management Issues

The Old Market Hall is in the poorest condition of the three operated by the Town Council and it is the most challenging to market the rooms for hire. There is a risk, if hire levels dropped, for it to be uneconomical to operate the building for public use.

An upgrade of the toilets could generate additional regular bookings to pay back some of the cost outlay.

This report has been prepared by the Town Clerk