

Agenda item 7

For decision: Discover Frome information point – Frome Town Centre

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Summary

This report recommends funding the Discover Frome Information Point until March 2020.

Background

From the end of June this year FTC has operated the Discover Frome Information Point at Black Swan Arts (BSA). We secured a 5 hour a week volunteer co-ordinator until October who has succeeded in establishing a core group of excellent volunteers.

The Information Point does not replace the Information Service which remains at the Town Hall from 09:00 – 17:00 Monday –Friday, rather it complements it. It is open over the weekend when the Town Hall is not. It will also sit alongside a package of measures such as improving the Discover Frome website and the production of a new annual guide in partnership with The List.

The primary focus of the information point is ‘what’s happening in Frome’ especially exhibitions and events, where to go including shops, cafés, nearby places of interest and how to get there; it helps coordinate the promotion of local events in the town and continues to build on the recommendations of the Performing Arts Panel that brought together many partners in the performing arts world in Frome.

The location has proved popular with visitors and residents alike and there is already significant footfall attracted to the BSA gallery, café and maker studios. It also has great visibility within the Cattle Market Car Park, a key arrival point for visitors. Businesses, particularly those involved in the visitor industry, and the Chamber of Commerce are also supportive of an information point being in the town.

A review has been carried out by FTC and BSA. This concluded that the Information Point was a success, both in terms of visitor feedback and visitor numbers. There is sufficient budget to keep it running until June 2018. Funding has been provided by Mendip Tourism. Our current lease with BSA also take us up to June 2018.

Discussion

Given the success of the Information Point, it is proposed to underwrite the funding of it until March 2020 at a cost of £7425. This length of commitment will enable us to invest in the Point, to increase its offer and train volunteers, safe in the knowledge that such an investment last will at least until March 2020. We expect that Mendip Tourism will continue to support the Information Point with another grant next year but this is not certain, hence the recommendation to underwrite the amount required. There is below a breakdown of the costs below.

Budget June 18 – March 2020

Expense	Cost 2018/19	Cost 2019/20
Rent BSA	2000	3000
Volunteer Coordinator	400	600
Printer + inks	350	150
Till = + costs	75	20
Terminal	30	
Training	100	100
Mobile - £30 per month	240	360
Total	3195	4230

Recommendation

Underwrite the cost of providing an information service at Black Swan Arts from June 2018 until March 2020. This cost is not to exceed £7435 in total.