

Agenda Item 9

For information - Update on the Frome Town Hall

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Summary

This report provides an update on Town Hall occupancy of the Town Hall, a year-end income forecast and a summary of our marketing initiatives.

Update on Town Hall occupancy

See below a table of who is where in the Town Hall

Fair Frome	Elliot Building
Frome FM	Upstairs
Why	Upstairs
FLP	Room 3, partially room 2
Active and in touch	Rangers Room
Fair Housing for Frome	Parlour on a desking basis
Wild Co working	Café – Tues - Thurs

Rent reviews have been offered and are in the process of being agreed for the long-term tenants and they will then be in place until the end of the tenancies in 2022.

Meeting room spaces

The below spaces are available for hire and or for internal meetings

Room 1	Meeting room
Council Chamber	Meeting room
Room 2	Meeting room evenings and weekend
Café	Mondays, Fridays and weekends
Parlour	Quiet working for staff/internal meeting room

The 6 free room bookings for tenants a year has been discontinued as meeting space comes under pressure. However, we continue to offer free community group use for two hours, at a week's notice, when the room is not let, and it is expected that our tenants will make more use of this in future.

On Monday evenings, where we offer community groups a session rate for the hourly fee regardless of the length, has proved popular. This helps support community groups and makes use of the building at a time when it is not often booked.

The Probation Service, The Baby Cafe and the Discovery Group and Plus Positive look set to remain as long term hirers as we continue to attract regular bookings from services that complement our offer.

In addition to the tenants and external meetings, FTC staff and Councillors have used the meeting rooms or the Council Chamber for scheduled meeting 391 times since 1 April.

Licenses

I am delighted to announce that the first weddings will take place in Frome Town Hall on the 13 June and we now have a copy of the wedding license lodged at the Town Hall. We are expecting this to be bookable on the Somerset Wedding Service website by the end of the month.

This will also herald the launch of our full- scale marketing of the Town Hall as a weekend venue. Our “special day every day” campaign will support our strategy of open, accessible, and easy to use community resource.

Town Hall Budget & Income

	Bookings - at 31/3/2020 (£)	Budgeted at 31/3/2020 (£)
Cafe	5483	2000
Chamber	13389.67	15000
Equipment hire	520	500
Meeting room hire	14002.26	5000
Tenants	26848.97	31992
Total	60,243.90	54,492

The current forecast, which is actual income so far plus bookings already in the system, indicates a surplus of £5751.90

Other factors to note with budget implications is that demand for the support stewards has been higher than anticipated – although this will be offset by the surplus.

The limited bar service which we have implemented this year has gone from strength to strength and turned a modest profit. We are planning for its continued success as we begin to market fully in the coming financial year.

Stewards

We have recruited a team of Town Hall Stewards who support events and meetings at the Town Hall in the evenings. They have been a great success and we have recently recruited an extra five Event Support Stewards whose role is slightly expanded to support events both in and out of the Town Hall focussing on, for example, supporting the bar or community events across the town.

Fabric of the building

We have had a number of large projects and events take place in the Town Hall, both planned and reactive:

- A new boiler.
- A leaking roof has meant planning and scheduling the subsequent repairs to both the roof and the plasterwork/décor
- Planned décor improvements have continued as part of our commitment to keep the Town Hall looking as clean and inviting as possible
- Planning has started for the spring clean

Car parking

We will also be introducing a new parking permit system in an effort to reduce the amount of staff time taken up in policing the car park. This will run be as before with staff permits, visitor permits and two hour slots for anyone else. What will be different is that anyone who comes into the building will have to leave their registration and will be issued a permit. These will then need to be return on leaving. We will also be highlighting on the ground the disabled space, the Co-Wheel space and the EV charging space so that users are clear where they should and shouldn't park.

Conclusions

The building feels vibrant and well used during the week. The addition of the wedding licence and the incoming registry wedding/civil partnership service will help to carry over this vibrancy into the weekends and ensure that our beautiful Town Hall becomes embedded into the civic fabric of the town.