

Agenda Item 7

For decision – Field to Fork Proposal

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Summary

Field to Fork is a new community group that aims to empower people in Frome to connect with each other and with nature, learn new skills, grow food, and cook in a healthy and more sustainable way. Field to Fork have been working with the Town Council to explore local food resilience and have linked with local food producers to develop an understanding of how much food is being produced locally and what needs local producers may have. The group are currently developing their growing site and councillors support is sought for this project.

Field to Fork Programme

‘Explore and support local food growing opportunities’ is part of the Council’s current work programme. Field to Fork have been working with the Town Council to explore local food resilience and have linked with local food producers to develop an understanding of how much food is being produced locally and what needs local producers may have.

Lack of healthy, affordable food and a lack of connection to community can exacerbate issues such as inequality, depression, and loneliness. The Covid-19 crisis also highlighted the importance of local food production and resilience. ‘Field to Fork’ are creating an inclusive and inspiring space with meaningful volunteering, education, and food production.

Phase 1 will establish a working community garden on half of the site (0.5 acres) on the outskirts of Frome, providing immediate and ongoing volunteering opportunities. This phase will also produce food for the local community. ‘Field to Fork’ will engage with the local community to understand their needs, and this initial work will provide a platform for future horticultural therapy, community education and food production in subsequent phases.

Phase 2 will include running community education courses and workshops and expanding garden capacities. Phase 3 will establish a community plant nursery and begin offering horticultural therapy, while continuing community education and local food production.

In 2019 the Town Council received a £5k donation from a local benefactor to support the implementation of a Citizen’s Assembly on climate change in Frome. This sum currently resides within a Citizens Assembly EMR. The Council was not able to secure additional funding for the Assembly and instead a range of community workshops were held to enable the community to feed into the Council’s Climate Emergency Strategy. Anna has been in touch with the funder who is happy for £1k of this money to be allocated to supporting this Field to Fork project. This will enable Field to Fork to implement a bore hole at their new site which is vital to enable food growing.

In line with Financial Regulations, all councillors (not just those on this Committee) have been contacted separately by email by the Business Manager and have been asked to vote on whether they support the use of £1k of the approved Citizen's Assembly EMR to be used to support the Field to Fork project. The outcome of that vote will be reported at the meeting.

Recommendation

Councillors to confirm their support for the Field to Fork project