

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, a year-end income forecast and a summary of our current marketing initiatives.

Town Hall occupancy

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

Fair Frome	Elliot Building
Frome FM	Upstairs
Frome Learning Partnership	Two small upstairs offices and the Parlour
Active and In Touch	Meeting room 5

There has been no change in the tenants since the November report. Active and In Touch have now moved upstairs to room 5 for three days a week. We are continuing to explore with Fair Frome whether to bring the YMCA's housing service and Citizen's Advice into room 5 to operate surgeries.

The antechamber (next to the Council Chamber) is now being used for storing chairs and tables. This already feels like the best use of the space and will make savings in time and furniture damage. The antechamber and the Rangers room, which is downstairs at the back of the building, will serve as occasional quiet rooms for staff as the building fills up.

The Registry Service has moved into the Café for six weeks while the Library is being refurbished - the café remains available to service functions on the weekends. Similarly, we are looking to support the credit union.

Room 4 is proving to be successful as a bookable space with community education trialling it over the coming term for at least two days a week.

Covid 19

As restrictions are lifted we are minded of the important balance between keeping an open an accessible building and everybody in the building feeling safe and comfortable. To that end, we are keeping screens and signage up, antibacterial hand gel out and masks available to those that want them. We will be trialling a new PPE recycling bin shortly.

The whole building has now returned to its original cleaning regime for both the public areas and staff areas and for tenants by agreement. And new risk assessments are in place for the building reflecting the change in regulations.

Town Hall Budget & Income

The Town Hall budget and income figures are taken from the actual bookings in the booking system.

	Income received and bookings at 31/1/2021	Budgeted, at 31/3/2022
Café	2896.25	4,200
Chamber	9062.5	12,384
Equipment hire	1030.47	2,300
Meeting room hire	11,013.17	8,000
Tenants	28,908.84	32,938
Total	53,911.23	59,832

The current forecast to end the year is a deficit of just under £6000. This is due to cancellations in December bookings following the rise of the Omicron variant and the subsequent working from home directive.

Despite the challenges, we have come back strongly this year in terms of booking and are heartened that we have reduced the deficit to March 2022 by £2500 over the last few weeks. Looking forward, we already have over £5000 worth of bookings in the diary for the coming financial year.

Fabric of the building

- Over the Christmas period West Country Tiling carried out repairs and improvements to an area of the roof that has seen problems with leaks in the past. This involved replacing rotten roof timbers and laying new lead, as well as building a new stepped main gutter system to speed up the flow of rainwater off the roof and stop it gathering. This is in line with our surveyor's recommendations to make improvements to certain flooding flashpoints, rather than to replace the entire roof
- The next step is to get internal repair work completed
- The electricians converted the lighting to LED
- Work has taken place in readiment for a new electric charging point – which will both increase capacity but also enable us to charge for power.
- And again, over the closed period, the building's Electrical Installation Condition Report was undertaken which needs to be completed once every 5 years.
- A new quinquennial survey was deemed unnecessary by the surveyor, and so we will continue to implement the existing one using the existing cyclical maintenance schedule of work over the coming five years.
- New way-finding signs are up reflecting the new layout of the building.

Conclusions

After what felt like another false start in the run up to Christmas, we now have reason to be optimistic again – the building is back up and running again and it feels busy and vibrant. The staff are returning as are most of our regular meetings and we have already seen an increase in

bookings this year. We hope that that will now remain a constant and are now actively marketing the building again and so have every reason to feel optimistic for the coming year.