

Agenda Item 4

For decision – Whether to acquire the leasehold of the Loop de Loop building in the Cattle Market car park

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Summary

Loop de Loop is a converted toilet block in the Cattle Market car park which is currently home to the Community Fridge. The building is owned by Mendip District Council and was leased to volunteers. The lease lapsed in 2018. The building is in need of maintenance and a new lease to be put in place to protect the future of the Community Fridge and Larder.

Frome Town Council has entered into negotiations with MDC to take on the lease of the building for 5 years and take on responsibility for interior and external maintenance. This will make it easier to make repairs when needed which have been estimated at up to £800.

1. Loop de Loop is a converted toilet block in the Cattle Market car park.

It houses the Frome Community Fridge and Larder, a kitchen hatch, a winter coat rack and a “gallery” space.

A team of volunteers converted the building on a shoestring budget, and it has become an iconic part of the Town Centre. Currently the small kitchen hatch is used by Lungi Babas, a small street food business, to serve lunch during the week and by JJ’s doubles at the Saturday market.

The Community Fridge and Larder operates from Loop de Loop. The community fridge is part of Edventure CIC who cover the insurance but is wholly run by a team of 16 dedicated volunteers supported by Frome Town Council. Between them the volunteers manage between 8-12 pick-ups a day from local businesses to rescue food that would otherwise be thrown out but is perfectly fine to be eaten. The community fridge saves 30 tonnes of food waste per year and is relied on by people in vulnerable circumstances in the community.

The Fridge has suffered significant vandalism since Christmas with the larder door being smashed three times. Police reports have been filed, and Terri (volunteer Fridge coordinator) raised £4,000 from the community in under a week to pay for steel doors.

The money raised has been transferred to Frome Town Council for safe keeping and out of this we have paid for 2 new steel doors for the Fridge and Larder to protect them from further vandalism. The doors will be branded so that users know what’s behind them. The remaining money will be kept by FTC for future maintenance including possible replacement of the Fridge itself soon.

We would like the current occupants to be able to continue using the building as they are currently.

2. Maintenance

There is some maintenance work that needs doing, 3 of 4 lights at the front need replacing and the exterior needs cleaning and repainting. The guttering also needs replacing. This has been costed at a maximum of £800.

3. Lease conditions

A draft lease is currently being negotiated based on the previous lease but with amendments giving Frome Town Council responsibility for maintenance; this will make it easier to undertake repairs. MDC will retain responsibility for the structure.

The lease will be for 5 years; it covers just the front units of the building with MDC retaining responsibility for the back room which houses the electricity supply for the market. MDC also retain responsibility for the wall behind the building.

Recommendation

Agree a 5-year lease of Loop de Loop on a peppercorn rent and take responsibility for maintenance to enable the Community Fridge and Larder to continue to operate