

Agenda Item 3

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 February report.

We have seen the return to the Town Hall of a large number of weekly and monthly bookings and Room 4 is proving to be successful as a bookable space really helping to expand our offer. We have community education now using our spaces currently for 4 ten-week courses, Mendip Family Time in 3 times a week. Seetec, Young Somerset, Mind and the Probation service (who have now extended their hours) all now are booked up on a weekly basis. A brief luring of one regular booking to elsewhere, saw the return last week of their large monthly bookings.

The café for the final quarter of the last year was occupied by Frome Registration Office who have now returned to the Library and is now a bookable space again. As more people are using the building and free space is becoming more scarce, the café is becoming useful as an impromptu meeting place as well as space as somewhere to have lunch away from desks. And of course, it remains an excellent offer on wedding days, and parties etc for use as a cafe bar etc.

Covid 19

As restrictions are lifted it's important to establish the right balance between keeping an open 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 also provide additional cleaning at times of heavy footfall.

Income forecast

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

	Income received and bookings at	Budgeted, at 31/3/2022
Café	3,848.25	4,200
Chamber	11,252.50	12,384
Equipment hire	1,070	2,300
Meeting room hire	12,033.75	8,000
Tenants	28,959.84	32,938
Total	57,164.34	59,832

We had expected more of a deficit and forecasted £6k last time. However, I am delighted to report that even after all the periods of closure, working from home directives and tenant changes, we managed to reduce it to a year end deficit of £2,667.

Considering these challenges of last year, and in part because the new year's budget was set in a time of uncertainty and working from home, we had set a lower more conservative budget of £49,924 for this new financial year. However, we have had an astonishing first month in terms of bookings coming in so we already find ourselves with over £45,000 worth of bookings in the system – meaning that this coming year we would expect to more than exceed the current budget. As usual though, let's not count our chickens yet. Who knows what the coming 11 months will bring.

Fabric of the building

- 3 phase electricity is being bought into the building to enable the new electric car charge points to be connected and to function at their optimum. Users will be charged for this service
- Similarly, the solar panels are also being installed
- We are currently trialling a new recycling bin for used face masks, gloves, and other PPE
- Other current maintenance include scheduling works to restore and consolidate the floor in the council chamber to ensure that it remains in top condition.

Conclusions

The Town Hall now feels back to pre-Covid self. Not only is it a nice place to work, it is an all-round community offer – a hub of information, education and training and befriending, it is busy and vibrant with a lot going on, and the challenge remains to keep it looking its best and functioning smoothly.