

Agenda Item 4

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 other initiatives to support the Town Hall.

Town Hall occupancy

Fair Frome	Elliot Building
Frome FM	Upstairs
Frome Learning Partnership	Two small upstairs offices and the Parlour

Our current tenants are as above, which represents a reduction since the last time we reported as we said goodbye to Active and in touch – who have moved to their own premises earlier this year. Fair Frome’s lease is up at the end of the year with discussions having started around whether they will renew; the building is used for their pantry project on Tuesday afternoons following their move to new premises. FLP, who are on a short lease have confirmed that they will remain in place at the end of the financial year. This represents a reduction in long term tenants however with an increase in staff team and uncertainty around what our commitments might be elsewhere we are keeping the space flexible. There are several interested charities and groups looking for office space so we can review that as our own requirements for space become evident.

As the team increases, Room 4 (at the top of the stairs), previously a meeting room, has now been converted back into office space. Room 3 (next to reception) is functioning again as a meeting room, with hybrid facilities. In many ways this is an improvement both for staff and sound quality, although we will miss having the offer of a larger bookable space. Rooms 1,3,5, the Café and the Council Chamber remain bookable for both internal and external meetings.

We continue to be popular with our regular booking: Community Education, Young Somerset, Mind, The Probation Service continue to operate after hours, Somerset Skills and Learning, Garston Vets. The Refugee Welcome Hub currently operates on Tuesday and Thursday in the café, Citizens Advice (CA) will be running appointment sessions alongside with Mendip Health Connections and, from September, CA will be operating a drop-in service every Monday.

Weddings remain popular too - we have had our first FTC staff member be married here this week. And we also continue to offer rooms on a Monday evening at an hourly community rate regardless of session length which is popular with smaller community groups.

The café space remains popular with staff and Cllrs as a break out space and for unscheduled meetings as well as staff lunches. It also continues to be used as a bar for functions.

## Bookings

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

	Income received at 19th July 2023	Annual income budget for 2023/24
Café	710	
Chamber	2465	19641
Equipment hire	558.60	2415
Meeting room hire	3330.00	8400
Tenants	7235.34	25680
<b>Total</b>	<b>14298.94</b>	<b>56136</b>

The bookings in the system at March 31 2024 show a deficit of £28,110.98 against the budget. However, at the end of the first quarter we are on track to reach our income budget by year end.

## Fabric of the building

- Planned draft proofing work continues and the next phase will be more of the upstairs windows this summer.
- We have had a number of internal areas painted in line with the quinquennial plan. We are now gaining quotes for the exterior paint work.
- The Community Fridge is likely to continue to operate at the Town Hall for the foreseeable future.
- The next big expenditure will be a replacement air conditioning unit for the comms cupboard in the upstairs kitchen.

## Conclusions

Following changes at the Town Hall over the last six month the Town Hall is settling into a new pattern of working and bookings. The reduction in the tenants and the increase in bookable space has increased flexibility. It has been busy and vibrant, with an increase in our hybrid meetings offer and services and local organisations using it for their meetings. The challenge remains to keep it looking its best and functioning smoothly.