

Coleshill Community Warm Room

Summary

The Coleshill Warm Room has been running in the Hudson Room since the beginning of November last year. The Community Centre Warm Room has been successfully operating since March this year. These two rooms have been well supported and are offered free to the local people in and around Coleshill.

We may have another challenging winter, with high fuel and food costs, and mortgage payments plus the expense of Christmas. Members need to consider if and how these facilities might be continued at the two buildings.

Recommendation

To consider the continuation of the “Warm Room” project in the Hudson Room of the Town Hall and in the Mill Room of the Community Centre.

Background

The group of people who now regularly attend both warm rooms are kind, diverse and individual. They are people who would otherwise perhaps not come together, and yet they really enjoy the companionship, discussions, sharing and camaraderie of one another, each week. New friendships have been made and these people care about one another, support each other and now even have day trips out, together.

One couple (who live in Coleshill) have naturally evolved into the organisers of this group and have independently applied for funding to have days out, to expand and enhance the lives of those who attend the Warm Rooms. This is an ideal additional benefit, that adds more to this group, benefiting the users, and thus, the community.

People who would otherwise be stuck at home feeling lonely and isolated are now feeling involved in a local community-based project and enjoying the benefits. As such, the users have again requested that the Council consider continuing this facility, for the foreseeable future.

The current arrangements are 10-1 Tuesday to Thursday in the Hudson Room and 10-1 on Tuesdays (only) for the Mill Room. Both warm rooms could continue as they are at present for opening days and times, but the only challenge is when we have more visitors than we can get into the Hudson Room. This is being resolved by users being considerate and generous, and moving on/out to vacate seats for new arrivals. This shows the level of response and compassion within the group, who continue to consider one another’s needs.

Finance and Value for Money

As the Town Hall heating is already on during the above times, due to staff and hirers in the building, then no additional heating or lighting costs would be incurred. If donations and grant monies are available, these can support the provision of any refreshments. Games can continue to be borrowed, donated, or brought in by the people themselves.

The refreshments in the town hall's warm room are donated by the firm RJA (who are connected to one of the regular attendees) and the members themselves bake and bring in food, cakes, biscuits themselves too. The refreshments in the Community Centre warm room are currently provided by the Hub provisions which are mostly donated to it by residents.

Risk Management Issues

This project is now well established and requires little staff involvement. It does receive some Hub volunteer assistance when needed, as a couple of Hub volunteers have chosen to join in and get involved. The noise level can sometimes be a nuisance to other users and staff in the building.

Users would be covered by the Town Council's insurance as general participants in the building. Thus, there is little risk of the Town Council, whilst offering significant benefits to the reputation of the Council and the wellbeing of the community.

There is a risk that income from a room hire in the Hudson Room on a Tuesday to Thursday has to be turned away, but that is rare. Any movement of the Hudson Room Warm Room into the larger Old Courtroom on a regular basis, would, however, lead to possible disruption of other regular and casual hirers.

This report has been prepared by the C & P Manager