

**Email received from Wem Town Hall Trustees 3.2.25**

Sent: 03 February 2025 14:24

To: Town Clerk <info@wem.gov.uk>

Cc: Rose Horner, Pamela King; Peter Jones; Huw Edwards; Sharon Angus-Crawshaw; Allan Brown.

Subject: Re Funding Agreement.....

Penny

Wem Town Hall Community Trust would like to thank Wem Town Council for their offer. However, following discussions with the full trust board, concerns were raised about the offer and its terms and conditions. We would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss alternatives with councillors at your earliest convenience.

Regards

John Dinsdale

Chair Wem Town Hall Community Trust

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*to facilitate discussions a response was sent by the Town Clerk asking for more information about the trust's concerns and what alternatives they wished the Council to consider.*

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Email response received 17.2.25

Further to our recent emails in regard to the above, the trustees would like to make the following points to guide further discussions on the matter at the next Town Council meeting.

Trustees have expressed their disappointment at the ongoing reduction in the level of funding being offered to Wem Town Hall by Wem Town Council on a year by year basis. Whilst we are fully appreciative of the increasing financial constraints that local councils are dealing with, we would like to point out that the current sum being offered is equivalent to that paid to clean the public toilets in Wem. The funding provided by the Town Council has always been used to underpin the core costs of the Town Hall so we can maintain a vibrant community hub. Wem Town Hall Community Trust is constantly seeking and applying for grants to enable the development of new initiatives, like the work we are doing with the local SEND community, and to help with our core costs, but again, we are operating in a very challenging environment.

The funding we receive from Wem Town Council provides a vital contribution to our considerable running costs. As you are aware, we deliver a range of services with a very small staff team and a large number of dedicated volunteers, without which, we would find it impossible to provide the services we do. Our users are primarily drawn from the local community and the surrounding area. Your funding helps us maintain Wem Town Hall as a focal point on the High Street, with opening hours from 9am to 4pm weekdays, 9am to 3pm on Saturdays, on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings until 10pm with other evenings on an ad hoc basis, depending on bookings, adding to the vibrancy off the High Street.

The reporting conditions applied to this funding we feel are excessive and we are puzzled as to why they have been imposed now, when in previous years they have been more considered and reasonable.

It is simply not possible to capture the socio-economic statistics from all our users as you have requested. We do not have the available resources to be able to do this effectively and in compliance with GDPR and Data Protection requirements.

The Cafe, whilst acting independently from the Trust, is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Town Hall and any surplus profits generated, are paid to the Town Hall at year end. As you will be aware, the Town Hall is operating within a challenging environment and whilst we have improving numbers, we are still operating below pre-pandemic levels. Therefore any cafe contributions are very welcome and necessary.

Wem Town Hall has always tried to provide a comprehensive report to the Wem Town Council liaison Committee meetings and during 2024 responded to the Council by provided more details around numbers that was requested.

We note the wish of the councillors to meet without staff present from both organisations at future liaison meetings.

Trustees are extremely grateful to the Town Council for their previous support, both financial and in partnership and hope this will continue into the future so that Wem Town Hall is supported as a vibrant, thriving hub and focal point on the High Street, as a benefit to both residents and businesses of Wem.

Wem Town Hall trustees would like the opportunity to meet with the liaison committee councillors to discuss the above points in more details.

Regards

John Dinsdale Chair of Wem Town Hall Community Trust.

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Resolution made 23.1.25

836/25 **Town Hall Trust Funding Agreement** – to consider recommendations of the working party.

**Resolved: to approve a one year funding agreement from 1.4.25 – 31.3.26 of £14000 subject to the following funding objectives:**

- **To support the development of Wem Town Hall so that it can continue to provide and develop new activities and services that cater for residents of Wem of all ages, backgrounds and circumstances.**  
*Reporting criteria - evidence must be provided of the number of new activities and services developed by the Town Hall Trust along with socioeconomic data about those making use of the Town Hall. This must not include any data relating to the café.*
- **To support economic activity in the town of Wem including supporting initiatives that aim to directly benefit the local economy**  
*Reporting Criteria – evidence will be required on how this objective is being met. Private room hire agreements, unless the hire fee is discounted by the Town Hall to support the business, should not be included. This must not include any data relating to the café.*

**Further Resolved: that future meetings of the Town Hall Trust Liaison Group should be held with only trustees and Councillors present.**

Cllr Soul did not vote on this item.