



## **Finance and General Purposes Committee: Civic Hall as Local Testing Site - Agenda item 4, Monday 25th October 2021**

### **What is the report about?**

This report is about the Town Council's Civic Hall being used as a Local Testing Site (LTS).

### **What is the reason for making this report?**

The reason for making this report is to seek Council's agreement (or otherwise) to allow the Civic Hall to be used as a LTS beyond the existing license which is due to end on 2nd December 2021.

### **What are the recommendations?**

It is recommended that Council considers the request to extend the use of the Civic Hall as a Local Testing Site to the end of March 2022 on a 'rolling monthly agreement'.

### **Report details**

In November 2020 the Town Council were approached by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to use the Civic Hall as a Local Testing Site (LTS).

Councillors agreed to this request, and a six-month agreement with the DHSC was entered into from 3rd December 2020.

In April 2021, a request was received from DHSC to extend the use of the Civic Hall as a LTS beyond the six-month agreement (i.e. beyond June 2021) to December on a 'rolling monthly agreement'. Councillors again agreed to this request.

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DHSC have now requested that the Hall continue as a LTS until the end of March 2022, again on a 'rolling monthly agreement'. Council is therefore being asked to consider this request.

In considering the request, Councillors should note the following information.

The Hall is well used by local people requiring a PCR test. In July, 2,322 tests were conducted. This fell to 1,509 tests in August, increased to 3,184 in September.

The Town Council does not receive any direct income from DHSC for the Hall being used as a LTS.

If it is agreed that the Hall can be used as a LTS until the end of March next year, there will be zero income generated from the Hall in the current financial year, resulting in the overall income budget being **£43,000** lower than stated. This is broken down as follows:

- Budgeted Room Hire income: £8,500;
- Budgeted Bar Income: £22,000; and,
- Budgeted Catering Income: £12,500.

Covid restrictions in place since March 2020 have meant that the Hall has either been closed for long periods or has only been able to open with significant limitations on the types of event that take place.

Wales is now at Alert Level 0 meaning there are less restrictions and limitations on the events that can be staged in the Hall. If the Hall does not continue as a LTS, it could potentially reopen for bookings in December, subject to the outcome of an assessment of the condition of the Hall.

December is traditionally our busiest time of the year, and a number of bookings have been provisionally taken. These include: seven dance shows; two children's club Christmas parties; a Christmas Church Service; and the return of a regular country

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dancing event. Based on previous years, the projected income from these events could be approx. £7,000.

There are however costs associated with running these types of events such as bar and catering stock, and staffing. These could be in the region of £5,000

We have also received a number of provisional bookings into next year.

In January we have enquiries for the Hall which if confirmed could generate income of approx. £3,000. The types of enquiries include: a local community panto for 3 performances; a wedding anniversary party; the return of 2 regular monthly dance events; and, dance classes for children.

Costs associated with running these events would be approx. £1,700.

Three of our regular users of the venue have made a provisional booking for February and March. In addition, there is a blood donation session each month and a new dancing event. These bookings could generate income of approx. £4,000. Costs associated with the type of events are likely to be around £2,000.

Whilst the Hall is being used as a LTS, the agreement stated that the operating costs for the Hall would be reimbursed to the Town Council by DHSC.

The agreement did not include the Council being reimbursed for such items as telephone line and broadband, or the fire and security alarm systems. As the expectation was for the Hall to be returned to the Town Council in May, it was felt that these costs could be absorbed in the short-term due to them being critical for the operation of the Hall. However, these will now be included in the next invoice as it is unfair that the Town Council incurs costs that are outside of its control.

If it is agreed that the Hall can be used as a LTS until the end of March next year, the overall expenditure budget for the current financial year will be **reduced by £48,000**.

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If the Hall is returned to the Town Council's management then we become liable for operational costs, such as business rates and utilities equating to around £6,000.

If Councillors agree to the request to extend the Hall's use as a LTS to the end of March 2022, it is recommended this be subject to a monthly review taking account of:  
Bookings/enquiries for the following month; Covid regulations / restrictions at the time;  
Staffing implications; and, the local need for the facility.