

Background

Shropshire Council was successful in its application to the Government's Welcome Back Fund for funding to support towns to welcome the public back to High Streets post covid. A meeting was held with Town and Parish Clerks on 19.7.21 with Matthew Mead and Steve Brown from Shropshire Council to discuss the fund.

Steve Brown confirmed that £288k has been awarded to Shropshire towns and larger parishes. It was explained that due to the bureaucracy around the funding which has been come from the European Regional Development Fund the money would be spent by Shropshire Council but that each town and larger parish would have an allocation which they can spend against two criteria

- Supporting the Christmas Period – works need to be in addition to anything that has been done previously.
- Enhancing the High Street e.g additional street cleaning, seating, planters.

Forms will be sent out to Town Councils outlining the governance arrangements over funding and the projects will be managed by the Place Plan Officers. These had not been received at the time of writing the report.

The allocation of funding for Wem is £10,500

It is anticipated that some of the work may be carried out by Shropshire Council's contractors and questions were asked at the meeting as to whether the existing contractors actually had the capacity to carry out this extra work and those present were assured that they would be able to meet any increase in demand.

Clerks suggestions for expenditure of the fund consideration

Purchase of Market Stalls

The provision of market stalls will add a level of professionalism to the outdoor market which may help to attract new traders to the outdoor market. The stalls can also be used throughout the year during other events held in the town e.g Christmas Festival, Quarter Markets. As the units are heavy approx. 65kg a location will need to be found to store the units when not in use. Three potential storage areas have been identified but the preferred site is at the far end of the Jubilee Square in the corner. But this will be subject to an agreement being reached with Incredible Edible as they currently use this space of storage form of a shared space with Incredible Edible.



It is recommended that bags are purchased for each stall as these are on wheels and will make it easier to move the stalls around

- 6 x trader table top market stalls as in diagram 2.4m wide x 0.9m deep. with galvanised frames @ approx £550 each £3300
[Trader Table Type - Trader Table Type - Market Stalls \(apexmarketstalls.co.uk\)](http://apexmarketstalls.co.uk)
- Purchase of 6 bags with wheels for ease of transportation £720
- Purchase storage unit for stalls £1000 approx.

Approx total £5020

High Street Improvements

Painting of all bins along the High Street, Aston Street and main Car Park total 13

Painting all bollards outside Town Hall and Kings

Cleaning all other bollards in the town

Cost painting bins £585 bollards £105 cleaning £40

Estimated £1000 (includes contingency for items not identified).



Jubilee Square Enhancement

Planters - Purchase of wooden planters or barrel planters for Jubilee Square to be located along the White Lion boundary and filled with herbs and perennial bee friendly plants to complement Incredible Edible garden.

Approx. £750 including plants and compost

Mural - Funding of a Mural along the theme of thank you to all volunteers past and present to be painted along brick wall that runs alongside Jubilee Square **Cost unknown.**

Christmas

The addition of white string lights to trees in Jubilee Square to provide a festive feel to the square during the run up to Christmas which will enhance the square during the Christmas Festival. **Quote awaited**

Other suggestions

Replacement of Better Welcome Wem banners

Audit needed of all banners still in existence. Only banners within in the Town Centre will be covered by the grant, permission will also be required to erect banners from Shropshire Council **Cost unknown**

Running a Christmas Love Wem Love shops campaign again – it is not known if this can be funded using the grant **cost £700**

Estimated costs

Please note all costs have a built in contingency

Item	Estimate
Market Stall purchase plus store (inc contingency)	£5020
Painting work	£1000
Planters	£750
Tree lights	Cost awaited
Mural	Cost awaited
Christmas Shopping campaign	£700
Allocation	£10,500

Timescales

To maximise the benefit of the fund to the town's economy it is important to agree expenditure as soon as possible especially as the Town Council will not be meeting again until September. If agreement is reached it would be useful to have the market stalls and storage area purchased in time for the Harvest Market. Shropshire Council have indicated that they require the forms completed by 13th August with indicative ideas, but this will not be possible due to annual leave.

The Christmas lights, shopping campaign, mural and banner suggestions can be progressed later as they are not as time sensitive.

Recommendation

That the Town Council delegate authority to Town Clerk, Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairman of the Amenities and Services Committee to submit applications for expenditure on the items selected by the Town Council as a priority as long as they comply with the conditions of the grant.