

## **5. FACILITIES MANAGERS REPORT – 18 January 2022**

### **FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING**

#### **New Liskeard Room**

Liskeard and Looe Food Bank are continuing to rent the New Liskeard Room until the end of February. A few of our regular hirers have been found alternative meeting space, for example, in the Emily Hobhouse Room. Theatre performers are still able to use the New Liskeard Room as a changing room facility after 3pm on weekdays, at weekends and by special arrangement.

#### **Welcome Back Fund**

The PA equipment for Fore Street has been installed and an order has been placed for the 16 additional metal planters. All purchased items remain the property of the Town Council and will be security marked and added to the insurance schedule. Helen Tiplady, from Hall for Cornwall will be working alongside the Town Council and the Traders Association to help deliver the Welcome Back Fund Project The funding has to be spent by end of March 2022 and the total ear-marked funding for Liskeard is £11,000.00.

#### **Water Refill Station / The Fountain Project Update**

At the Facilities Committee meeting held on 16 November 2021 it was agreed that the Facilities Manager would undertake further research regarding the installation of a drinking water station as part of the restoration of the Grade II listed Fountain and/or the installation of stand-alone stations in other Town Council owned premises and brought forward as a proposal by Liskeard Town Forum.

Public drinking fountains, made popular by the Victorians to give access to safe, clean drinking water, are now seeing an exciting revival. In the 15 years prior to COVID-19, consumption of bottled water doubled. Along with an increase in the consumption of other soft drinks, this means 13 billion plastic bottles are now used in the UK every year. Encouraging people to carry and refill a reusable bottle and making it easy for them to do so, such as by providing drinking water fountains and refill stations, is one of the most effective ways to reduce plastic pollution.

#### **The Fountain vs stand-alone drinking water stations:**

The Fountain is a Grade II listed monument therefore any modifications require Listed Building Consent and this takes and 6-months to achieve. There is a water supply in the fountain that is mainly used to top up the water bowser. The water supply for the individual stone bowls has worked within the last 10 years but the bowls are currently used to display flowers. Although the water maybe from the mains and therefore potable, the connections/fittings into the individual stone bowls are almost certainly not compliant with the regulations for the supply of safe drinking water.

There is funding available for restoring historic water fountains from the National Heritage Lottery Fund and the Drinking Fountains Association. Further information is available from <http://www.drinkingfountains.org/>. An example of a recent restoration undertaken by The London Borough of Hounslow cost £14,000. More details are available at: [https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/news/article/981/historic\\_drinking\\_fountain\\_brought\\_back\\_to\\_life](https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/news/article/981/historic_drinking_fountain_brought_back_to_life)

A stand-alone drinking water fountain or refill station is more straight forward and cheaper to install. There are various options available including both indoor and outdoor units. Lewes Town Council recently installed a water fountain/refill station for a total cost of £5,000. This comprised £2,500 for the water refill station unit, £1,200 to install, £1,000 for connection and £300 for signage. Examples of water fountains/refill stations can be found at:

[www.miw.co.uk](http://www.miw.co.uk)  
[www.waterlogic.com/en-gb](http://www.waterlogic.com/en-gb)

#### **Further considerations:**

**Suitable location** - Choosing the right location will help maximise the benefits provided by the water fountain/refill station. An area with good natural surveillance and security is ideal. The water fountain/refill station should ideally be placed against a wall and out of direct sunlight.

**Accessibility** - The refill station should be accessible to all. Consideration should be given to whether the water fountain should be available 24 hours a day 7-days week in which case an outdoor fountain would be most suitable or whether limited access would be OK, for example a water fountain in the Public Hall would be available from 8.30am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

**Relevant permissions and consents** - South West Water Ltd must be notified prior to any installation, and we need to provide contact information, a description of the proposed work, a plan of the location/premises and a diagram showing the pipework and fittings, and details of the contractor undertaking the installation. We need to demonstrate that the chosen design and installation meets the relevant Regulations. The unit must be a Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS) approved product - <https://www.wrasapprovals.co.uk/>

**Design** - Consider an appropriate design, for example, outdoor refill stations need to be robust and designed specifically for outdoor use. There should be a minimum number of exposed moving parts, made from durable materials that will not corrode, jam, or become easily damaged. There are various designs available that include options for refilling water bottles/cups, bubbler taps, and taps at different heights for children and even for refilling dog bowls!

**Regulations** - The installation must meet The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. Check the relevant Regulations and make sure you use a 'Water Safe' accredited installer.

**Cost** – As well as the initial cost (approx. £800 for an indoor water fountain/refill station and £2,500 for an outdoor unit plus installation consents consideration should be given to the cost of on-going maintenance e.g. repairs, regular checks, daily cleaning.

A further, cheaper option would be to promote a water ReFILL scheme with local businesses. Local businesses offering free refills of water are listed on the ReFILL app. For further information see <https://www.refill.org.uk/get-involved/>. The cost of setting up the scheme would be based around promotion and advertising.

**COVID-19** - Refilling drinks bottles at public facilities poses no greater risk than purchasing drinks in disposable plastic bottles if the following precautions are followed: A regular, thorough cleaning regime is in place; the unit is well maintained; the water fountain/refill station is located close to a hand sanitiser unit and/or somewhere where people can wash their hands; and there is an information sign advising of who to contact in case there is a problem; recommending that the water is allowed to run for 10 seconds before placing bottle under the tap, that touching the mouth of the bottle against the machine must be avoided, and that lids and nozzles should not be touched by the hand that has operated the machine (if not touch-free) until hand sanitiser has been reapplied. Further information available from <https://www.miw.co.uk/drinking-fountains-and-covid-19/>.

**Possible locations to consider:**

- Thorn Park/Rapsons Park/Castle Park – benefits many user groups including families, children, people exercising, dog walkers and their dogs!
- The Parade – close to the bus stops, taxi rank and cycle racks.
- Fore Street – high footfall area. Possibly in the Guildhall arcade area.
- Cattle Market as part of the redevelopment project.
- Westbourne Toilets (external) - mains water connection and drainage relatively straight forward so cost, and disruption kept to a minimum. Opportunity to use bold, eye-catching signage. Easily visible/accessible from Coop, car park and Westbourne Gardens
- Dean Street Toilets/Dean Street Square – as for Westbourne toilets.
- The Public Hall or Foresters Hall – restricted availability but a cheaper option.

**Other practical considerations:**

A water meter will help measure use of the fountain and help identify if there are problems with leakage. Mains water is already at a steady temperature but warming can be a contamination risk so the supply should not run past a hot water pipe and, to ensure freshness, it should not be the last connection point. Filters are **not** recommended as there should not be a problem with the water in the first place, and it means there is something else to maintain. Unmaintained/unreplaced filters themselves can be a bigger cause of water quality problems.

**Possible sources of funding:**

The National Lottery – [www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk](http://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk)

Biffa Award

South West Water

The Coop Community Fund – <https://causes.coop.co.uk>

The Drinking Fountain Association – [www.drinkingfountains.org](http://www.drinkingfountains.org)

Plastic Free Liskeard

Liskeard Town Council

Local sponsorship

Crowdfunding

**Further information:**

*Drinking Water Fountains: A How To Guide* published by Sustain and City to Sea, May 2019.