

**Committee: FULL COUNCIL**

**Date: 18 October 2022**

**Title: Cost of living crisis**

**Purpose of Report**

For members to consider possible strategies and actions for dealing with the “Cost of Living Crisis”

**Recommendation:**

Members agree to strategies for looking to support Ilminster residents with the “Cost of Living Crisis.

**Report:**

1. Members will recall that at the meeting on the 27 September they agreed that strategies for how Ilminster Town Council might help its residents to deal with the cost of living crisis that is currently engulfing many in both Ilminster and further afield.
2. The UK is experiencing a significant cost of living crisis due to a number of factors resulting in higher fuel and energy prices, increased food prices and a rise in inflation which is affecting residents in most socio-economic brackets.
3. Recent weeks have seen financial markets fluctuating whilst the government endeavours to find ways to sustain growth whilst at the same time delivering tax cuts and providing support to low-income earners. It is not for this council to comment upon the likely success or failure of these strategies.
4. Whilst we continue to look to the UK government to mitigate the worst impact of these rising costs it is likely that new local innovations and greater local coordination might assist and therefore the council may wish to explore the options open to it.
5. It was reported at the last meeting that the following national support had been promised:
  - A £650 one off payment for all residents on benefits (to be paid in two halves)
  - A £400 energy grant to all households (non-repayable)

- A £150 Council Tax rebate for all houses bands D to A
  - A £300 Pensioner cost of living payment
  - A £150 Disability payment. In addition, residents have access to the Winter Fuel payment and Household Support Fund.
6. Somerset County Council are currently looking at ways to further support residents' financial resilience through work with Credit Unions and food resilience using a number of projects and initiatives.
  7. There will be other initiatives in the district and county councils and priorities identified by a wide range of local and regional, third sector organisations to further support residents during the cost-of-living crisis and the practical steps they might take to mitigate the impact.
  8. We have already been asked to notify Somerset County Council of any spaces that the council owns or manages that might be used as a "Warm Space" in the coming months.
  9. Cllr Taylor, Cllr Keitch and Cllr McKillop put their names forward to work together to consider what initiatives could be brought to this meeting in order for members to agree how Ilminster Town Council might help their community.
  10. As part of this a questionnaire has been devised that is hoped will allow residents to indicate whether they would use a "Warm Space" facility and if so, how often. This will be able to be shared both electronically and in hard format.
  11. Cllr Taylor has also produced the attached report that suggests additional ways that the town council might assist. **Appendix 17B**
  12. Members to note the report and agree the proposed contained in Appendix 17B of this report.

**Mark Tredwin**  
**Town Clerk**  
**October 2022**