

## Request for help maintaining Old Library, Cornholme as a community facility after COVID

Dear Resources Committee members

I have been a Trustee of the Cornholme Old Library for over five years and in that time Todmorden Town Council has been very supportive of various projects so thank-you for that .

Some years ago as you may be aware the building received substantial funding from the Lottery Fund to repair and renovate the building and fund several paid employees. It was home to various initiatives including a parents and toddler group, job club, community 'pay as you go' cafe and also used as a drop-in facility by police and local councillors. Organisations like Healthy Minds were also able to use it for advice sessions and all was going relatively well until the pandemic which made it impossible for it to continue as it had.

Coupled with the end of the Lottery funding in June and lockdown it very much looked as though the building would have to permanently close, several Trustees resigned and paid staff had to be made redundant. Since then the CFFC (Community Foundation For Calderdale) has agreed a rent 'holiday' , new Trustees have taken over and since September with the help of £5000 in funding from central Govt we have been working in partnership with St Mary's Todmorden to offer a food drop-in specifically for Cornholme residents. We are currently providing a lifeline to around 20 households plus every week, buying a good range of food weekly, but this funding runs out at the end of March and we are almost spent up .

With the vaccination process in full swing we hope there is a real prospect of revitalising the building in the near future and we will be aiming to raise as much funding as we can to not only carry on the food bank but engage more local people and carry on the work the Old Library started several years ago. However to do that properly we need short-term help with the day-to day running costs of the building – so far everything is paid and up to date in terms of heating and utilities and we have been very careful with the remaining funds but our rent holiday will soon end and that alone is £250 a month. If we open up the building again there will also obviously be additional utilities costs. It would therefore be greatly appreciated if the Committee could consider allocating £500 in funding from the Council's Covid Fund to this valued community resource in one of the most economically and socially deprived parts of Todmorden . It would be a great shame if it did not survive the pandemic

Yours faithfully

Cllr Susan Press

Trustee Cornholme Old Library  
(personal capacity)