

Welshpool Town Council, The Vicarage Gardens, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7DD
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Document / Report #680

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Title	Community Fridge - April 2026
Date	7th May 2026

1. Purpose

1. To provide Members with an update on the operation of the Welshpool Community Fridge initiative, including usage data, operational arrangements and recent changes introduced to support the fair and sustainable operation of the scheme.

2. Background

1. On 23rd July 2025, Full Council approved the establishment of a community fridge initiative within Welshpool, aimed at reducing food waste and supporting the wider community through the redistribution of surplus food.
2. Further equipment and infrastructure required to support the project was approved by Full Council in September 2025 under resolution WTCM309.
3. Following procurement and installation works, the community fridge formally opened in February 2026.
4. The project has been supported by volunteers assisting with the collection and redistribution of surplus food from local businesses including Starbucks and Costa Coffee.

3. Usage and Performance

1. Since opening, the community fridge has successfully redistributed a significant quantity of food which would otherwise likely have gone to waste.
2. 30.65kg was saved in February, 35kg in March and April's figure is to be confirmed.

4. Challenges

1. Whilst the initiative has generally operated positively, concerns have recently been raised by volunteers regarding repeated instances of individuals removing large quantities of food shortly after stock is placed into the fridge. Concerns were expressed that this limited the opportunity for wider public benefit and risked discouraging volunteers supporting the initiative.
2. The Council has considered these concerns carefully. As the community fridge operates as an open-access scheme and is not means-tested, the Council recognises the importance of maintaining accessibility whilst also encouraging fair use.

3. In response, the following operational changes have now been introduced:
 1. The freezer is now secured/locked outside of operating hours;
 2. Opening days have been revised to Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays only;
4. The intention of these measures is to support the long-term sustainability of the initiative whilst retaining its accessible and community-focused nature.

5. Volunteer contribution

1. The success of the community fridge initiative has been heavily dependent on the contribution of volunteers who regularly collect, transport and organise surplus food items. The Committee may wish to formally record its thanks to those volunteers for their ongoing efforts and commitment to the project.

6. Financial

1. The project was given £2,500 directly from Powys County Council as part of County Cllr Richard Church's nomination to the Anti-Poverty Fund.
2. To date the fridge has spent £2,252 with £248 remaining which went into general reserves as part of 2025/26.
3. Powys County Council have asked if we can use the remaining funds to purchase food for the project.

7. Decision

1. To note the report.