**Policy and Finance Committee**

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| Date: | **17 September 2018** |
| Title: | **Communications Update** |
| Purpose of the Report: | **To update Members in respect of Town Council Communications.** |
| Contact Officer: | **Amy Holden, Senior Administration Officer** |

| Corporate Objective/s | Leighton-Linslade Town Council Three Year Plan: Objective 15: to expand and consolidate opportunities for two-way dialogue with residents and ensure greater community engagement in, and awareness of, Town Council activity. | |
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| **Implications:** | | |
| **Human Resources** | X | None |
| **Operational/Service delivery** | X | None |
| **Procedural/Legal** | X | None |
| **Financial** | X | None |

1. **RECOMMENDATION/S**

   **Should members be minded, the proposals are:**

1.1 **To note the report.**

2. **CONTEXT**

2.1 As a publicly funded body, Leighton-Linslade Town Council has a duty to actively engage with the local community, providing information regarding its activities and proposed future projects, seeking feedback from residents and raising awareness of the Council and its remit within the Parish.

2.2 Historically, community engagement has taken place through a variety of forums including a printed newsletter, public consultation exercises, a website and community events.

2.3 More recently, following the rapid developments in technology and the advent of the Localism Agenda and e-Government, the Town Council has moved further towards electronic media, communicating with residents through channels including LLTC Website, Facebook, Twitter, Mailchimp, Survey Monkey, YouTube and its own app.

**3. COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE**

3.1 To ensure we have a clear direction and to help improve efficiency a communications work plan has been created (see **below**) and will be included in all future communications update reports. Overall, it is clear that a multi-faceted approach is needed and that the range of tools we use for communication is continuing to expand.

3.2 **Website:** We have been with our new website support provider since February 2018. It was decided at the time of signing the contract that there would be a settling in period to allow time for the websites to move to the new providers servers and for the new provider to familiarise themselves with site set ups.

Some agreed projects have been completed with include updating forms to adhere to GDPR compliance, redesign of events landing page and each induvial event page.

Development plans for all four websites have been drafted and are being worked through between Officers and our website provider.

3.3 **App:** the LLTC app now has 248 active downloads and continues to be promoted via About Town and social media, as well as a dedicated panel on the homepage of the main LLTC website.

3.4 **Electronic signage:** The first out of the four electronic signs was installed in April 2018 at Leighton Buzzard Train stations. Content messages are being scheduled alongside our main digital content planner.

3.5 **KPI'S/Analytics:** It had been our intention to create a data dashboard within Google analytics which allows monthly reports to be submitted straight to us. This is now in place and the second monthly reports have been received. This is a great tool to allow us to better understand users' habits, how they are reaching us and where they are coming from. Example reports for August 2018 are **attached** for your perusal.

3.6 **Branding:** LLTC branding guidelines were established in 2015 but are now in the process of being updated to incorporate all the new branding developed since that time, including Astral Park, TACTIC, the community events, children's trail and street market branding. This will ensure that any parties promoting these assets will utilise the correct fonts, colours and branding messages in all marketing activity.

3.7 **Internal Processes:** As well as use of a digital content planner, an internal communications process is being worked on. This will provide a clear method for officers to follow to ensure key messages are getting out there in a pre-planned, organised manner.

It will ensure each team is working simultaneously to improve project communication lead times.

## 4.    SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE AND SUCCESSES

4.1    **Instagram:** The main LLTC Instagram now has 252 followers. A dedicated LB Market Instagram account was launched in August this year and currently has 154 followers. Consideration is being given to launching a dedicated Instagram profile for TACTIC.

4.2    **Social media Campaigns**: Our planned social media campaigns continue to grow and improve. This year's Canal Festival Facebook event reached over 100,000 people alone with 2,500 people directly engaging/responding with the event.



4.3    **Content Planning**: On average 30 posts are pre-planned and scheduled across 11 profiles (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) this is excluding sharing, liking and commenting on partner organisation profiles.

4.4    **KPI's**: Previously only the main LLTC social media profiles have had KPI goals attached, however we have now extended this to cover all Council owned profiles.

**COMMUNICATIONS WORK PLAN**

| Projects | Objective | Update | Next steps |
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| LLTC Website www.leightonlinslade-tc.gov.uk | Continued development of the LLTC website, aspirations to include online payments and creation of a style guide. | Improvements were made to the events section of the website in may this year. The changes have been well received and have the set the tone we wish to roll out across the rest of the site. | We are currently reviewing all live pages of the website with a view to update aspects of content and design.<br><br>We would like to add features such as a calendar and live interactive forms for venue hire and event trader registration. |
| Market Website www.leightonbuzzardmarket.co.uk) | The market website was launched in September 2017 as part of the market relaunch project. | The trader section of the website has been developed and now includes an 'apply' page which includes all documents needed by a potential new trader. The page also includes an online contact us form. | The next steps on the development plan include creating a dedicated 'traders' page which will include details on all traders: what they sell, links to their website and social media profiles.<br><br>We are also in the process of changing the website layout to include a new 'Our Markets' page which we believe will provide users a clearer route to explore our speciality markets. |

| Astral Park Website www.astralpark.co.uk | To better reflect Astral Park's branding, provide key information for those searching online for a facility to host their activity, event, meeting or function. | Since the site launched there has not been many changes. Officers feel with some updates to images and information the Centre could be much better represented. | A briefing meeting has been held and a wish list drawn up.<br><br>Initial discussions have taken place with our website provider. |
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| TACTIC Website www.tactic-centre.co.uk | TACTIC's website was launched at the same time as the main LLTC website. It was decided a separate website should be created as the target audience is of a younger age. | Since the site launched there haven't been any design or function changes. The design is in desperate need of updating and the information provided could be hugely improved. | A briefing meeting has been held and a wish list drawn up.<br><br>Initial discussions have taken place with our website provider. |
| Google Analytics Dashboard | To create a personalised dashboard on our Google Analytics account to help monitor visitor and download stats. | The data dashboard has now been implemented and monthly reports are received containing all planned KPI's. | Continue to monitor KPIs, add make changes to our communications dependent on results. |
| Town Council App | To provide key information in a mobile friendly, easy to use format, including being able to send our subscribers 'Push Notifications' (instant alerts). | We have 240 active users. The app now has a dedicated strip on the LLTC website homepage. | Continue to build followers by promoting the app via social media and LLTC website and use the push notifications more. |
| Communication strategy | Due to the progression in the use of digital communication tools we feel now is the time to consider | After some consideration it was decided that the strategy would work better as two | The draft Community Engagement Strategy is recommended for approval. |

| | introducing a communications strategy.<br><br>This will ensure we have a clear direction and processes for staff members to follow to ensure all departments are working towards the same goal. | documents: A community engagement strategy and an in-house communications process to be followed by officers. | The In-house communications process is under development. |

**COMMUNICATIONS WORK PLAN**