



# LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

## Policy and Finance Committee

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**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021

**Title:** Communications Update

**Purpose of the Report:** To provide Committee with a six-monthly update in respect of Town Council Communications.

**Contact Officers:** Amy Holden, Senior Administration Officer

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<b>Corporate Objective/s</b>	<b>Leighton-Linslade Town Council Five Year Plan: Objective #1:</b> to regularly review how we communicate and seek to embrace new technologies.
<b>Implications:</b>	
<b>Human Resources</b>	None
<b>Operational/Service delivery</b>	None
<b>Procedural/Legal</b>	None
<b>Financial</b>	None

### 1. RECOMMENDATION

Should Members be minded, the proposal is:

- 1.1 To note the information regarding Town Council communications.

### 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 Regular community engagement takes place through a variety of platforms including a printed newsletter, email campaigns, public consultation exercises, websites, social media platforms, Apps, market stalls and community events.

- 2.3 In line with the Localism Agenda and e-Government and rapid developments in technology, the Town Council continues to increase its investment in electronic media, using multiple channels to continue to engage as much of the community as possible.
- 2.4 We continue to develop our communications using the LLTC Website, Market Website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Mailchimp, Survey Monkey, YouTube and the LLTC app, to make information accessible to all.
- 2.5 Our ongoing commitment to ensure we still maintain print-based communication channels for those without online access proved all the more important this summer, where printed communications were the key to ensuring vital information was received by every household in the parish.

### **3. INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

- 3.1. After over a year of home-working, the majority of employees are now back in the office. An internal audit of all hardware will be carried out and a process created to manage the use of LLTC owned laptops for pre-arranged flexible working going forward.
- 3.2. Meetings between staff, councillors and external associates have moved from solely online to a hybrid solution. The introduction of upgraded hardware in the Council Chamber has allowed a seamless transition and enabled outside parties to successfully join scheduled meetings.

### **4. WEBSITE**

- 4.1. During Covid-19 our website became one of the most powerful tools we had for communicating with residents and providing up to date information about local support available to them.
- 4.2. In the last communications update it was advised that the LB Market would be launched in two phases. We hope to start on the second phase once decisions are made about priority pages.
- 4.7 We continue to develop the informative side of the website, e.g. the new FAQ pages and online forms.
- 4.8 Looking ahead, we have ambitions to improve the layout of the home page to better communicate important news stories and messages.
- 4.9 There are also plans to introduce interactive images and video. Both are proven to receive good levels of engagement.
- 4.10 More concise monitoring of analytics is also high on the agenda.

## **5 TOWN COUNCIL APPS**

- 5.1 The LLTC app continues to be promoted via About Town and social media, as well as a dedicated panel on the homepage of the main LLTC website. Current downloads are 530.
- 5.2 Adding the Children's Trail to the existing Buzzard Trail app is on the workplan for this year, this will bring together our town trails in one place and hopefully further the reach.
- 5.3 There are also ambitions to add the Sands of Time Trail which is currently being developed to the Buzzard Trails app, offering users a choice of three trails all on the same app.

## **6 ELECTRONIC SIGNAGE**

- 6.1 Content for all four electronic signs is planned alongside our wider communications messages using our digital content planner and content is communicated in advance on the first page of members' weekly newsletter.
- 6.2 The updated signage software is now in use allowing officers to pre-schedule messages. This allows for a more seamless approach as messages can be built into our content planning and be scheduled in the same way as our other communications. It also means messages can be changed or stopped outside of normal working hours (e.g. messages about Saturday markets or events, which would previously have had to be kept on display until the return to work on Monday).

## **7 SOCIAL MEDIA**

- 7.1 Along with our website, social media continues to be an invaluable tool in communicating vital information. This has become even more evident during the Covid-19 pandemic as we have shared not only information about Town Council services/facilities but wider public health messages.
- 7.2 The recommended actions from the external social media report recently carried out are now being worked through. Points raised included a safer way to access LLTC owned pages, improved management of access including a database of who has access to which profiles and from which IP address. Allowing access from authorised devices only.
- 7.3 The report also provided ideas on ways to improve scheduling, reporting and providing a cohesive approach to responding to messages across all profiles which sits alongside the promises within our new Customer Service Strategy.

## **8 ANALYTICS**

### **Websites:**

- 8.1 Website analytic reports continue to be sent to us with a breakdown summary from our website provider to see what users of the sites are visiting the site for.
- 8.2 Parks and Open Spaces and Events pages were the most popular pages over the past six months. With the Parson's Close Recreation Ground page and Splash and Play being of particular interest.
- 8.3 Hits to the venue hire pages have seen a large increase due to bookings for all venues now being taken for leisure and private hire.
- 8.4 Visitors to the website has again increased with an 18% jump this month from last with a total of 6,999 users in August.

### **Social Media:**

- 8.5 We currently have 21,184 followers across our Facebook profiles, with 4,678 people following the main Town Council Facebook profile. This represents a continued steady rise.
- 8.6 Instagram continues to attract a steady rise in followers despite limited time being spent on the platform. There are aspirations to build on the highlight icons and to post on Instagram stories more frequently.
- 8.7 Using Hootsuite's and the Insights on our Social Media sites we are able to gather information on how our followers engage with our posts. Some of the most popular posts since the last report (based on interactions with the post) are included at the end of this report.

## **9 BRANDING**

- 9.1 A branding guideline review is scheduled into the communications workplan as inconsistencies still exist across use of the LLTC brand palette.
- 9.2 There have been improvement projects carried out in branding across all service areas, and now we need to ensure all elements are pulled together and applied to future work across publications, marketing materials and digital graphics.

## 10 INTERNAL PROCESSES

- 10.1 Changes to Internal processes include use of a new interactive social media request form. This promotes timely information sharing between departments and ensures social media messages are always within platform characters.
- 10.2 Now staff are back working in the office and events are going ahead as planned there is an aspiration to bring back the internal communications meetings. These meetings are invaluable for information sharing and content planning.

## 11 CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1 The work put into the Town Council's communications offering over the past years was paramount in delivery timely and everchanging messages to our residents during an unprecedented time.
- 11.2 We look forward to continuing to build on and improve the Town Council's communications, ensuring

### Social Media examples:

**Leighton-Linslade Town Council Official**  
21 August

Big Lunch takes place in Parson's Close Recreation Ground today (11am – 5pm) and tomorrow so expect the park to be busier than usual during these times. Tomorrow's Music in the Park concert will take place at 3pm as normal.

As part of Big Lunch we're joined by foods from around the world including Sri Lankan, Italian, Indonesian and the Mediterranean which can be enjoyed on our picnic benches in the park or taken away to enjoy later in the day.

Mariachi Tequila and party band Revolve are joining us throughout the day on the main stage providing a perfect backdrop to alfresco dining and catching up with family and friends.

Not around today? Don't worry, we're doing it all again tomorrow too in Parson's Close Recreation Ground between 11am & 2pm.

#LLTC #LeightonBuzzard #Linslade #LeightonLinslade #LiveMusic #Bedfordshire #KeepingItLocalLB #BigLunch #Picnic #Streetfood

**Today 11am - 5pm**  
**Tomorrow 11am - 2pm**  
Parson's Close Recreation Ground | LU7 1SD

**BIG LUNCH** Main Stage Performances  
Mariachi Tequila & Revolve

4,032 People Reached  
43 Reactions, comments & shares

27 Like	8 On post	19 On shares
1 Love	0 On post	1 On shares
2 Comments	1 On Post	1 On Shares
13 Shares	13 On Post	0 On Shares

146 Post Clicks

13 Photo views	0 Link clicks	133 Other Clicks
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**NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**

0 Hide post	0 Hide all posts
0 Report as spam	0 Unlike Page

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts

Leighton-Linslade Town Council Official  
21 July

Pull up a picnic blanket and come down to Tiddenfoot Waterside Park on Saturday 31st July & Sunday 1st August for Films in the Paddocks, a weekend of free films for all the family.

On Saturday 31st July we'll be showing Trolls World Tour (11am), Mary Poppins Returns (3pm) and Bohemian Rhapsody (7pm) with Charlie & The Chocolate Factory and Beauty & The Beast being shown on Sunday 1st August.

If you don't fancy bringing a picnic we'll have pizza, ice cream and hot drinks on ... See more



7,507 People Reached

71 Reactions, comments & shares

22 Like	5 On post	17 On shares
2 Love	1 On post	1 On shares
1 Wow	1 On post	0 On shares
34 Comments	16 On Post	18 On Shares
12 Shares	12 On Post	0 On Shares

366 Post Clicks

10 Photo views	41 Link clicks	315 Other Clicks
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NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

0 Hide post	0 Hide all posts
0 Report as spam	0 Unlike Page

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts

Leighton-Linslade Town Council Official  
21 June

The Town Mayor, Cllr Farzana Kharawala opened a new shop in the town last Saturday and took the opportunity to show her encouragement to other recently opened new businesses in the town.

#KeepingItLocal #ShopLocalLB #StartUpBusiness #LBMarket



5,683 People Reached

148 Reactions, comments & shares

126 Like	85 On post	41 On shares
11 Love	10 On post	1 On shares
6 Comments	5 On Post	1 On Shares
5 Shares	5 On Post	0 On Shares

975 Post Clicks:

276 Photo views	0 Link clicks	699 Other Clicks
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NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

0 Hide post	1 Hide all posts
0 Report as spam	0 Unlike Page

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts

Get more likes, comments and shares  
When you boost this post, you'll show it to more people.