

Agenda Item 3

For Information: Update on marketing and communications

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Marketing and communications

The Marketing & Communication area of work both delivers projects within the strategic objectives of FTC and supports the rest of the team to deliver high quality communications and events. We work to a Communication Strategy ([Appendix 3.1](#)) that was adopted in 2016. This was reviewed in January 2019 and is due to be revisited in January 2020.

Simply, the strategy identifies who we need to communicate with and when, where and how to do so. Within that structure we have rebranded and developed a strong identity. We seek to be open, accessible and informative through all of our communications. It's more important than ever to align strategies across channels to ensure a consistent tone of voice to residents, visitors and the business community alike. This tone of open, can-do, trusted professionalism cascades down from any member of the staff team out through all our communication channels.

Our work is broadly structured into three aspects:

1. Communicating FTC's work through media channels, events and engagement and through supportive materials such as press, posters, digital content and brand awareness;
2. Highlighting Frome as a visitor destination through the Discover Frome Brand and the Information Point;
3. Marketing the town Hall Team (see separate report for information on Frome Town Hall). We ensure that it is fit for purpose, that best use is made of it, and that everyone has a positive experience.

We work to provide high quality communications to support the strategic aims of the council.

It is also important to examine how we are communicating as a council - new technologies can help to transform resident engagement in the form of digital marketing and social media channels whilst recognising that this must not be to the exclusion of traditional methods of communications, print media and notices. And of course, a picture paints a thousand words and so it is important where possible to be visual. Within this context is extremely important to enable us to be able to keep skills up to date and buy in services where applicable.

What follows provides an update on work delivered in the last financial year and represents an opportunity to look forward and to ask any questions.

Improving the image of the town through the visitor experience

- Discover Frome Information Point at Black Swan Arts is now firmly embedded - visitor numbers are up, and we are ready for the new season with a new season of cards and refreshed merchandise. We have two volunteer coordinators who we employ 5 hours a week to support the volunteers and we have instigated quarterly training meetings to upskill the volunteers and ensure they are valued as ambassadors of the town.
- A partnership with The List resulted in an improved Frome Annual, focusing on co-wheels car club, ebikes and walks this time as well as listings of independent businesses.
- Discover Frome website has gone from strength to strength with over 125,000 visits this year and up to date event listings.
- Particular attention has been paid to developing the Walkers are Welcome section of the website to include a number of local walks, cycling routes (and buses) through a series of maps and guides.
- We have developed a programme of professional training and delivered the new Guided Walks programme. This will mean that Frome will have guided walks every Wednesday and Sunday throughout the summer.
- A series of maps which we planned to be launched is now being delivered in partnership with the Walkers are Welcome group.
- The Singer's Trail was devised and launched to celebrate JW Singer's 200th birthday and a series of info boards were commissioned and expected to be sited on the 29th May as part of these celebrations.

Participation and engagement

- Participatory budgeting events – last year's successful organisations provided films of their events as feedback at the annual town meeting which also included a 'surprise' visit from Cheryl from Mojo Moves.
- The People's Budget events vote is complete for 2019/20 and we are looking forward to supporting the events. The Fair Housing for Frome Big Red Housing Bus project has already taken place and work has begun around the Fireworks event. This year the People's event was extended to include an online vote which had nearly 800 responses plus 350 year 8 students.
- The town vote took place last year, the public voted overwhelmingly for an orchard which was subsequently delivered by the Ranger Team in October. This year we are working with an organisation called Public Square to generate the ideas that we take to the town vote from within the community. Reassuringly, the general public and the year 8's results were aligned.
- The Make it Happen Conference was delivered in partnership with Purple Elephant – engaging 350 year 8's in the democratic process enabling them to learn new skills, empower them to get involved in community action through random acts of kindness and enabling them to vote for PB Events.

Increasing the information output of the Council for the purposes of well-being and civic pride

- Noticeboards have not been neglected. We now have an extensive network of 25 noticeboards and a volunteer noticeboard ambassador network has grown.
- All channels continue to be used to support all the projects that the Town Council are undertaking from print to online digital content.
- This has included the significant increase in Social Media output, through a clear and developed digital strategy including both websites, a series of online newsletters and ticket sales. My presentation at the meeting will focus on digital engagement.
- Campaigns such as the Bin It campaign continue to be supported with the addition of the new litter warriors. These campaigns work across channels and throughout the town as well as in discrete locales. The same is true of other areas of work such as events.
- Accessibility and participation in meetings remain a priority - using posters, trailing meetings, actively inviting members of the public. Live streaming remains an outstanding issue and we remain committed to finding a solution.

The Frome Arts Forum

- We continue to be committed to the performing arts in Frome and acknowledge the important part it plays in the town. Last year our focus was on young people and we explored the feasibility of a bursary fund to support access to the arts for young people based on the model of *give it a go* and looked at the creation of a Saturday morning music club. Frome Busks was an event grown out of the forum too. The forum is expected to change shape in the next administration.

Town Hall

- Frome Learning Partnership, Fair Housing for Frome and WILD Co-working were added to our list of tenants last year and the meeting rooms continue to be popular. The Drug and Alcohol Service and the Probation Service are now regular hirers.
- We have secured Change of Use permission for the town hall and the conditions were discharged to include air conditioning and evac chairs to allow us to run events with entertainment.
- Following our successful conference last year, we have developed a series of tours, Made Differently, which serve to support external enquiries regarding the Council's work.
- We have employed 10 support stewards to support town hall and events, and have brought the cleaning staff in-house to better support the facility.
- Now licensed, we are able to offer a bar as an auxiliary facility.
- We are waiting on the registrar service to see if we can hold weddings here as a registry office to give Frome residents another service in Frome. This would also extend to naming ceremonies and other civic ceremonies. A professional brochure is planned to showcase the town hall as a wedding venue and multi-use facility. It is frustrating that we are having to wait so long for the County Council to decide.

Events

- Events were identified as an important part of our Communication and Marketing strategy allowing us to engage both with the community in a different way but also as an outreach tool for increased participation.
- For the first time in recent years we took the Christmas event in house. The lantern parade was funded by PB and a great success which we hope to repeat this year.
- Successful PB events were marketed and attended by FTC staff.
- Lots of events across the town and in our Parks and Open Spaces were able to be facilitated by the FTC Team including Apple Day and Frome Children's Festival.
- The Town Hall has seen a number of special events and conferences from across the workplan including events such as Discover Frome Visitor Conference and the Solar Streets events as well as external events like the recent visit from Helen Pankhurst.

A few facts and figures

- 10 support stewards have been recruited to help support the Town Hall desk and external engagement events and have been recruited to be used across the entire team.
- Discover Frome Website has 125,000 visitors last year with 166,000 sessions – most of those were organic.
- Frome Town Council website had 61,000 visitors last year with 94,000 sessions with high referral rates from social media.
- Our Facebook page has 3119 followers which is 20% on last year.
- We have 2299 Twitter followers, with 130,800 impressions.
- We have 1359 Instagram followers, up 42% on last year.
- We have written 222 press releases and created 85 posters and leaflets.
- In the last 6 months we have seen 172 FTC meetings and events in the Town Hall.