

Agenda Item 5

For information - Marketing and Communication Update Sept 2020

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Summary

This report gives a flavour of the work that the Communication and Marketing Team has focussed on since the last committee meeting in July 2020.

The work of the communications team since July has mainly continued to focus on the Covid 19 emergency response. However, we have also managed to move our work programme along and support the rest of the team and their projects.

Here are some of the highlights:

- Our home page has now largely returned to normal with a focus on between six and ten news releases a fortnight. We normally get a slump in traffic to the site due to school holidays, but not this year. We saw a big spike in traffic when we announced the School Street project, after the public meeting and inclusion of FAQs (w/c 24 August). Last week also saw a big spike due to the Market Place improvements driving more traffic to those particular pages. Interestingly, our covid FAQs were last seen in the "top 10" of pages visited in w/c 27 July.
- Our main focus on the website has been improving accessibility following an accessibility audit. This has involved restructuring and remodelling. The main changes have been differences in architecture, archiving materials no longer relevant, improving links to be more meaningful and easier to read and increasing content. Although the new website will not be so design lead, we have worked hard to ensure we have not compromised on looks or functionality. This depth of work on our website is new for our team and has involved learning new skills.
- The Discover Frome website has also largely returned to normal with content focussing on what local businesses are doing, including new areas of work to feature the train station and Badcox. The Open Art trail 'Meet the Artist' series and the nature activities have also been popular, in part due to lack of permitted events.
- Following the successful engagement of Wild about Frome and the nature activities through the summer, we have continued this theme with a series of outdoor activities featuring in our social media feeds. A continuation of the nature activities leaflets and activities via social media will hopefully lead people to our sites who would not normally access them.
- The Discover Frome information point has also re opened with our hardy group of volunteers - there have been some changes: The barn door remains closed to the bottom, we can only have one shift a day and visitor numbers remain small but it is good to have a drop-in presence in the town. Instrumental in supporting the opening of

Discover Frome Information Point was our summer placement Poppy Reilly-Stitt. And she has now moved on to her first professional role – we wish Poppy luck.

- Working on events is slow progress in this climate. However, we continue to work with partners to help ensure safe and secure events at, for example, the Remembrance Day service and the Christmas Light switch on.
- We also continue to work with PB winners, including Window Wanderland, looking at new opportunities. These include Christmas lantern trails and a Halloween trail.
- We provided Comms and Event support to the hugely successful Bike Jumble.
- We continue to liaise with arts and venue spaces and to support events, activities, performances, openings, and re-openings where we can.
- Working with Griffiths, we have continued to support the Market Place phase 2 communications, answering questions, and ensuring newsletters and phase updates have been leafletted around the town every Friday.
- Working with the Museum, we have produced the images for the Bus stops that will morph into a new Frome story adding to the depository of Singers.
- We continue to write, collate, and support newsletters, updates, and articles. These include the new volunteers and neighbourhood networks newsletters as well as the business updates.
- We have created, delivered, and managed the Comms campaign around School Streets. We are currently collating the feed-back received together with a round up report to help support next steps.
- Developing a new promotion to remind the town that the Town Hall, although closed to visitors, is open for bookings. This was preceded by the earlier promotion to remind residents that the Town Hall is closed but that the Council is open for business
- Co - ordinating the phased return of the noticeboard volunteers within strict social distancing guidelines. This has been a relief all round. We are now working with Open Story Tellers to see how we can work with them to fill some gaps in coverage.
- New permanent noticeboard signs have been created that highlight *Streetlink*. These will be permanent features on our noticeboards and will point rough sleepers to relevant services.
- We continue to help promote Discuss and Do and other business events such as the webinar called “Bringing a trainee into your business.” This remains on the site for future reference.

- Working with Public Health England and other partners on new messaging to support the new restrictions
- And meanwhile we continue to answer and manage questions and suggestions from our social media streams. Notable activity includes: Wild about sharing posts which were always well received and of huge engagement; our first wedding at the Town Hall; toilets reopening in Victoria Park; Bike Jumble posts; and then last week on the Boyle Cross post following on from the Council Meeting
- We have also had an influx in requests from BBC Somerset Radio and BBC Points West to coordinate interviews and videos, raising the profile of FTC in the town and Frome's profile to the county. Since July they have covered: Wild about Sharing, Weddings at the Town Hall, School Streets, Super Pirates, Bike Jumble, Social distance/rug spraying at VP, Litter warriors, Cycle training.

Once the new website has been finalised, our next large projects will be to frame the new Frome App, and design and deliver an entire new brand launch and platform for the family connect service. The review of the Marketing & Communication Strategy and subsequent timetabling remains on-hold whilst we assess the work plan in context of the Recovery Plan and the subsequent change in timetabling now scheduled for November.