

Agenda Item 5

For information - Marketing and Communications Update

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Summary

This report is an overview of the work of the comms team since our last report in November.

General

The Comms team as ever have had a very packed calendar over the last three months promoting and delivering a number of events and initiatives. Fresh of the back of Glow in the Park we have also delivered the Walking Festival, which saw over 200 walkers over two days go on a series of walks, and the Christmas Light Switch which saw over 3500 celebrate the lighting of the Christmas tree, with over 500 lantern kits being sold. The Frome Times Wraparound vision for 2030 represented an enormous body of work and went into every home in Frome and was really well received.

There were several cancelled events in December due to Covid. The most notable Discuss and Do the which was sold out. The signs are that residents are ready to be back at events and back in the Town Hall. However, events such as Riverside with Friends of the River Frome and Tree planting during this period proved a sell out and more recently online Climate Action Group and Tricky Conversation training also performed really well.

FTC Website

Since reporting last an incredible 76 news releases have been written over a range of subjects for the Frome Town Council Website. October saw a record month for website visits (since first recording), specifically visiting the Glow in the Park press releases. The stats we reviewed for the previous Council Matters meeting went up to the week prior to Glow in the Park event. During that week and on the actual day we saw figures soar with almost 2000 users and 3000 page views on 30 October - the day of the event (our usual daily users for the website is between 300-400).

Week of	Sessions	Users	Pageviews
11-Oct	2892	2372	6591
18-Oct	3424	2370	7210
25-Oct	7814	6123	12154
01-Nov	3436	2842	7441
08-Nov	3497	2834	7441

November also saw a peak again for the Christmas light switch on 26 November with double the normal amount of traffic to the site.

## FIND Directory

[The FIND Directory](#) is still performing well during this past period. There was a seasonal lull over Christmas as is the same across all FTC sites. The Frome Living section of the directory is still performing the best over that period, outperforming by double the next best performing/most visited categories which are 'Things to do and places to go' and 'Family support and advice'. In the [Frome Living](#) section - Community groups, clubs and hobbies is the best performing category. Since its launch in May 2021, the Frome Living section outperforms the other areas month on month.

The team will be carrying out a spring clean over the next couple of months, refreshing content and keeping it up to date and relevant.

## Social Channels

As expected, on Facebook the coverage and engagement of Glow in the Park was phenomenal. On the evening of the event, the channel was awash with some truly spectacular imagery, which was a testament to event as a whole. The Light the Night Christmas event was incredibly popular too.

But it's not just events that stimulate engagement on Facebook, the channel also provides the opportunity for residents to engage on town concerns. For example, the vandalism at Victoria Park in November and road closures.

- Our social media channels are still full and flourishing in terms of content and we've been seeing some great conversation and engagement on the recently shared Green Breather Days post, with what feels like a constructive conversation. The ideas and concerns raised will all be fed into the meeting being held on Thursday 10 February.
- The popularity of the relaunch of ebikes at the start of January and the coverage of Frome Station Friends, illustrate the range of content which is posted.
- In the main, Twitter generally follows a similar vein as FB and the post for the Frome Times Wrap around for COP26 gained the most impressions.
- Additionally, FTC's Instagram has recently seen a resurgence in popularity for the "personal" content, and posts depicting our residents or of areas around town (Tiny Forest tree planting, frosty mornings in Rodden Meadow, weddings).
- Over the past few weeks, it's clear that nice photos of Frome is appealing to our audience most. For example, recently, the most popular have been Frome station Friends photo, weddings, and a frosty Rodden Meadow. Next steps are making sure there is more of a mixture of events/information about what we're doing and collecting interesting, nice to look at, Frome content to support our strategic objectives.
- Changing the language and photos on the Healthy Homes Energy Advice has seen an improvement in reactions and engagements – meaning that it's important to create new collateral.
- We are having real problems with running what Facebook sees as social/political ads. Despite taking to colleagues and peers we're still to find a work around.
- We are Resilience heavy at the moment and it's important to create some balance to our communications otherwise people will get fatigued.

- But, of course, the Mayor's Christmas message was incredibly popular across all channels.

### Discover Frome

The new Discover Frome social channels not only support and promote our visitor offer through the website, but the events, shopping, markets and food and drink pages are consistently in the top ten pages of the website.

- Discover Frome has received 45,000 visitors to the site since November and over 70000 page views.
- As hoped in the run up to the Walking Festival, the page was in the top 10. And following the Walking Fest, the town walks page moved into the top 10 together with the Christmas markets guide and the Christmas in Frome page. People are finding what they want easily and quickly but also that Discover Frome is reaching its strategic objective of promoting and showcasing the town through its offer of independent businesses, walking and events.
- The posts with most engagement was the tribute to The Settle Restaurant, which has sadly closed, with over 2.3k engagements, the New York Times article and the collection of festive photos taken by DF followers.
- Not as successful as last year was the Facebook Virtual Market. Given the figures and the poor interaction in stark relief to last year we will be looking for other ways to promote our independent makers in the Christmas promotion next year. We are planning that the newly forthcoming Discover Frome Makers brand will inform those decisions.

### Newsletters

- Newsletter stats remain positive in terms of opens and link clicks and continue to be around 4% higher on average than our peers in terms of open rate (Clerk's Update)
- We now have eight regular newsletters including the recently added Wild Bunch newsletter. We also have the irregular newsletters on Wild about Trees and Active Travel
- Next steps are clearing up mailing list – which has been started with the Business Newsletters.

### Conclusion

There is a definite skew in our comms work at the moment towards our green objectives with continuing promotions supporting Ebikes, new additions to our walking series as well as a new plaque walk. As well as looking at producing collateral and content to support the Play Strategy and the Food Network, we continue to work with both our events and others; promoting and supporting where we can. Projects to note include: the Green breather days where work has begun liaising with residents and stakeholders; Frome Photographic - a new photography festival that will run alongside of the Frome Festival; a new Green Film festival which will be delivered in May (we are asking for submissions now); the Kindness Festival – where the Town Hall will be hosting a number of events; Window Wanderland, and the welcome return of Frome Buses, this year in collaboration with Frome College.