

Agenda Item 9

For information - Marketing and Communications Update
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Summary

This report is an overview of the work of the Marketing and Communications team since our last report in February.

General

The Marketing and Communication team as ever have had a very packed calendar over the last three months promoting and delivering a number of projects, events and initiatives designed to engage the town, our visitors and promote the work of the Frome Town council. The work of the comms team roughly divided cross three workstreams: The Town Hall, promoting and supporting the events that happen in it and ensuring good occupation rates; Discover Frome which broadly is the visitor offer element and which also segues with supporting walking and cycling, and the Arts; and finally, and arguably, most importantly delivering and promoting projects that support our residents and highlight the work of Frome Town Council. This is underpinned by our marketing and communications strategy which in turn is designed to support as many of our strategic objectives as possible.

Frome Community Channels

The Frome Community channels consist of our Frome Town Council website, our community social channels, our community noticeboards and most of our events what follows is a brief overview of what has been going on.

- Since the last Council Matters we have posted 67 press releases and continually update pages to reflect the status of projects and work programme achievements, such as People’s Budget, Wild Bunch, Neighbourhood Network, School Streets, and so on.
- The Frome Town Council website has been performing consistently throughout the period since the last Council Matters review.
- A lot of traffic comes to our website via our social channels, the audience engage by clicking through to read the articles/pages on the associated post topic. This in turn allows them to “hammock” through to other content on our website which is a primary goal for the team.

Date	Sessions	Users	Pageviews
February	10,642	7,916	24,611
March	14,985	10,837	35,449

- In March we launched the appeal to raise funds to assist Rabka, following a direct appeal from our twin town in Poland – to date this has raised £35,847. This had a direct impact in traffic to the site with around a 50% increase for sessions, users and page views.

- This campaign was not only about raising funds but also to support people who wanted to help in other ways, such as donating time or clothing, and supporting those who wanted to help host.
- There has also been support from across the FTC team to help the emergent Frome Welcome refugees group, to provide an identity and a social media presence, and support and promote meetings but also explore alternate fundraising mechanisms and information sharing systems.
- Our Platinum Jubilee page, along with the resources and guides we hold on our site for hosting your own street parties has also seen a lot of traffic.
- And of course, during the election period the Election pages have continually been updated with all the relevant information for voting in the upcoming parish/town and unitary elections.
- As ever this spring FTC's social channels have again been packed full of posts reflecting the wide variety of work of the FTC teams.
- The Ukrainian appeal has been in the forefront of posts since the launch in March, with reach and reactions on initial and follow up posts on social – the social channels were the perfect tool to raise awareness of the initial campaign and allowed the team to get information out, while linking to all the relevant and up to date information on the website and the all-important Just Giving page.
- The power of community was also reflected with the posts regarding Storm Eunice, which had one of the highest reach and engagements of the review period. The posts reassured residents and communicated the awareness of the damage the storm brought and how to stay safe. Posts regarding valued resources such as the Post Office in Portway and the information on road closures were also well received – highlighting the importance of our public information role.
- Events across the town have been well received this Spring, Window Wanderland gave an array of creative talent featured in windows across the town, while the inaugural Kindness Festival naturally elicited a warm feeling across FTC's posts and shared content.
- Visually on our social channels, FTC's Frome Busks event in collaboration with Frome College highlighted the musical talent of the students while bringing vibrancy to a sunny town centre in early April.
- FTC were also honoured to host the Annual Town Meeting where Mayor Andy Wrintmore presented his civic awards; all five recipients are well known in the town and got a lot of love, rightly so, on our social posts for their civic efforts supporting a community cohesion.
- The team continue to provide creative campaign content to accompany the Resilience work of the Healthy Home Surgeries and the Easy Energy wins cafes. A change in tone and the use of real-life examples and imagery is helping to promote future sessions.
- We continue to have problems with running what Facebook sees as social/political ads. Despite talking to colleagues and peers we're still to find a work around so the next step is to buy in expertise. Ads are important as they extend our reach beyond the already interested organic base
- The "Love Frome" Instagram post on a Friday has been rejuvenated recently and is indeed being shown a lot of love. These posts are aimed to highlight Frome at its best.

Discover Frome

This element of our work promotes civic pride and supports our visitor offer, events and spaces, walking and cycling and independent businesses. It is a whole package which includes a website, and the information point, and a newly structured social media.

- Discover Frome has received 28, 000 visitors to the site in February and March with over 58, 000 page views with users for January-March up on previous years' averages.
- Bounce rates show that users 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 top five most frequently visited pages (excluding the home page) are Why Frome? What's on, markets, shopping and town walks.
- Interestingly the top five identified locations of users is London, Bristol, Frome, Trowbridge and Edinburgh. It's worth noting that the number of users from London is significantly higher (10,258) than the second highest location Bristol, Frome is sitting in third place. So the site is predominately being used by people from outside the area, but still serves to provide locals with useful links to information and things to do.
- The '[Why Frome?](#)' page has become the top search result when you Google 'Frome' - still beating Wikipedia!
- 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.
- Instagram and Facebook followers are slowly on the increase
- Insta posts with most likes/comments were twin towns/Ukraine appeal; celebration of women/Frome Museum; Guided walks return; Valentine lamp.
- Facebook posts with the most engagement was the opening of Peacocks; twin towns linking to Ukraine appeal; Frome Buses; Ghost signs; Window Wanderland

Newsletters

We use Mailchimp to send out newsletters to targeted groups which people can sign up to and they can unsubscribe to as and when they want to – this is important for GDPR and helps ensure compliance. We have eight regular newsletters which continue to perform and are well received with an above average open rate.

- We have sent 23 newsletters since the last Council Matters review.
- Our new targeted newsletters such as Wild Bunch, Active Travel and Wild about Trees have excellent open rates; a recent School Streets newsletter had a 73% open rate and 40% click through rate. For reference, the industry standard open rate for email marketing is 17% with a click through rate of 10%.
- The mailing lists are being cleared up and a new multi sign up is being created to ensure that those who want to be informed easily can be.

Events

Events and meetings are an important way to engage with the town and are important for bringing people together, to share, learn, celebrate, and feel supported and heard, and to that end are used widely across the team.

- Since last reporting we have promoted or delivered over 13 events on Ticket tailor and have another 13 that we are actively promoting which results in a lot of column inches.
- And we continue to work with partners promoting and supporting where we can. Since reporting we have also hosted a number of events at the Kindness Festival, have supported Window Wanderland, and delivered Frome Buses in conjunction with the college – to a busy vibrant and bustling town, as well as supporting Make it Happen, the youth conference

The People's Budget

We have also delivered the People's Budget Jubilee vote and Events vote this spring. There were numerous suggestions for ideas and events with two different methods and this comes hot on the heels of The Peoples Budget Town vote which was delivered in December. All results produced clear “winners” – or where the people of Frome would like us to spend their money.

The winning Jubilee Project is the Stone Circle allowing for accessibility of the Blossom Circle planted in conjunction with community groups last year. This is being delivered by the Ranger team with a celebration event to follow on 2 June now being devised.

The People's Budget Events vote saw 6 projects worth £32,000 pitch for a budget of £25,000. Over 257 people voted along with all year 8's at our Make it Happen youth conference making real decisions about how a portion of our budget is spent. Although confident of a robust delivery, and four really good events in the form of The Children's Festival, The Kindness Festival, Caravan Arts and Somerset food Trail, the People's Budget doesn't appear to have captured the imagination of the town so we will bring this to a discussion later this year to discuss how to move forward.

Conclusion

March is always our busiest time of year. The necessity for the team to be responsive to situations as they arise, combined with the culmination of Discover Frome Makers and the resultant move for the Information Point and the volunteers to the round tower, and the necessity of delivering both People's Budgets back-to-back has compounded this. However, we continue to work hard to shape our engagement and be proud of the product - Green Film festival and Green Breather days are in our sites, the Jubilee Project celebration planning is underway, promoting Climate Action Group work is at the fore, with work also having started on Flex and the Cycle festival, we have made a healthy inroad into the new work programme.