

Agenda Item 3

For information - Update on Marketing and Communications work programme

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Summary

This report is an update of the Marketing and Communication teams' area of work and developments since the presentation to Oversight Committee in March 2025 – there is a focus on 'Communicating with us', monitoring and evaluation, and what the team are currently working. Events are covered in a separate paper.

Background

Our workstreams are divided into three strands: The Town Hall element; promotion of the Town, town centre and our visitor offer; and delivering and promoting events and projects identified in the Town Plan that support our residents and highlight the work of Frome Town Council.

1. The Town Hall

The Marketing and Communications team promote and support the many events and meetings that take place in the town hall. These range from meetings of community groups, screenings, workshops, parties, weddings and much more. We increased hire rates at the beginning of July 2025 to bring rates into line with the local average and ensure we aren't undercutting other local venues.

Demand remains high for all available spaces throughout the week and us on the weekends has increased with the use of the festival, the Open Artists, and by use of the Church.

2. Discover Frome

This area of our work Promotes the Town to visitors and Residents. The Discover Frome website is extremely popular, with annual traffic far exceeding that of the main FTC website – with something in partnership with the information point in Frome Library and a strong social media presence, it provides tourists, visitors and residents a valuable one-stop-shop resource to find what they need to know about events, shopping, accommodation, food and more.

As advised to the Oversight Committee in March 2025, despite its success, the DF website was very dated and in need to a major refresh. We have worked with local web developers Zonkey to create the look and feel of the new site and effect an enormous cleanse and review of site data, to ensure nothing of value was lost in the update and create a site structure that is user-friendly, attractive and logical. The brand new discoverfrome.co.uk launched on 22 July. It's been very well received so far by local stakeholders, with further demonstrations to come.

One of the site's innovations allows event organisers to upload their own events, with final approval by the comms team, replacing a system that relied upon the comms team individually creating all events from a web form. This will free up admin time, meaning events are live sooner and allowing greater autonomy for event organisers. The next phase is to be able to search the website under accessibility criteria.

3. **Delivering and promoting projects identified in the Town Plan that support our residents and highlight the work of Frome Town Council.**

Our support varies significantly between projects: for some events and projects we might simply amplify the voice of others; for others we might make the poster, create the collateral, manage bookings, provide the venue and help to staff on the day, providing support where possible to the same level as our in-house events.

To ensure we reach everyone, we employ multiple communications channels, aiming to talk to people in the spaces where they are most comfortable and in the way they choose to receive information, whether in person, in print or online. Our broad press and media distribution list helps us to gain radio and TV coverage for many projects, our own and those of other people. Our newsletters are wide reaching and varied – covering the business community, community groups and the Town centre, as well as the more general Frome Matters.

Since April our major project work has been the delivery of the markets, the loos, Great Big Green Week, Skate Park engagement through additional events, Safer School Streets evaluation, promoting the renewable energy events, Act to Adapt, the Bat Counts, and the Adderwell Crowdfunding campaign. We have also supported Let's Talk and Wild Bunch series of events, the Badgers Hill communications and meetings, been working with Frome Pride, Frome Business innovators forum, The Climate film Festival and the Royal British Legion. We have created a whole series of posters, info graphics and signs and collateral in house to improve presentation, documents and experience, such as new Victoria Park and Mary Baily management plans, signage at the Victoria Park loos, and the stumperies, as well as delivered messaging, signage and engagement around the Henley Way step removal.

Communicating with us - July 2025

[Communicating with us](#), our version of Who Reads What launched this month to increase our understanding of how residents access information about FTC's work and explore appetite for new communication methods. We regularly monitor all website and social media activity to inform content planning, but that only provides a picture of our digital/already engaged audience. Who Reads What will give a broader picture including 'offline' residents and we're popping up in locations across town such as the Carnival Funday and the Children's Festival to capture as broad a demographic as possible. We will present early results at this meeting.

As the Discover Frome site was not live for the survey launch it was excluded from the survey, but we will look to assess it through Insights and analytics separately once it has been more widely promoted.

Preliminary findings confirm that the time and resource put into populating the Website and using it as releases for the Frome Times is worthwhile. Facebook and e-newsletters, particularly the fortnightly Frome Matters/Town Clerk's update e-mailout also perform strongly, using internal metrics.

We took a strategic decision earlier in 2025 to use FTC Instagram mainly for collaboration posts with Discover Frome, video content and stories and to curate less original post content, on the strength of our research. The survey suggests that Instagram is indeed less impactful for residents for finding information about their town council.

The opposite appears to be true for Discover Frome. Our stats in recent months Amber has reduced the time she spends on Discover Frome's Facebook content and dedicated more time and energy to curating Instagram content for Discover Frome. It will be interesting to see the impact of the new site on Discover Frome socials, and vice versa.

There is appetite for the use of WhatsApp communities and a democratic digital platform - although there will be work to be done on explaining what that is, how it works and on bringing the community on board. The focus of our discussion among many respondents, who were also looking for opportunities for face-to-face conversations with councillors and staff, in a less formal settings than a council meeting.

There appears to an understanding in residents that anyone can access meetings of the town council, they are livestreamed on YouTube and residents are welcome to attend in person or online via Zoom, with recordings available to view after the event. But many see it as irrelevant. Meeting attendance from the public remains lower than desired and it's an ongoing piece of work to increase engagement. Continuing to break down barriers to access is an important step in this direction.

Monitoring and evaluation

An amount of our work- the news releases, social media planning, and the more targeted newsletters are what might be called the jobbing element of comms work, and a lot of planning and deliberation goes into what we write. It is important that this is on message, meets the strategic objectives of the Town Council Plan and reaches its target audience. Monitoring and evaluation are therefore vital and in recent months we've been amalgamating several pre-existing data collection methods, to provide a detailed picture of our metrics. The new shared document enables us to deploy the data analysis strengths of AI across the entire picture of council comms and provide insights to inform strategy and direction. It is also speeding up the process of collating the monthly data. This frees up admin time, allowing us to be more strategic and data driven in our planning.

We continue to monitor the monthly performance of campaigns where key messages can be reviewed and updated, including what we do and how we do it, AB testing as well as seeking to reach those who are seldom heard. The 'Communicating with us data' will inform this element of our work.

Marketing and Communications team – July 2025

For information this is what the team are currently focussing on :

Rachel current focus is on the promotion of the new Discover Frome website, trying to unlock the Palmer Street event as well as event planning for the year ahead, including a reimagined Christmas event, Cobble Wobble and Remembrance, Valentine Lamp; and handing over the toilet contract and the markets to the Independent.

Lucy is currently looking at updating brand guidelines, supporting School Streets final tranche of feedback, and focussing on ‘Communicating with us?’ pop ups.

Laura has begun to scope out What does Frome Town Council do? This project provides a Leaflet and online resource, working with the summer placements on digital content and assets across our platforms. She is also leading on the summer placements.

Miles is currently working on new signage for the key centre and signs to welcome people to our parks and open spaces. They are also supporting delivery of a new digital engagement platform (see discussion).

Nykki is currently working on road closures for the larger events and supporting the Markets as the Admin and the day to day management of the markets gets handed over to the independent. They are also keeping track of the bookings in our parks and open spaces, and the community borrowing, and support stewards – an enormous task this time of year.

Now that the work on Discover Frome is launched Amber is working on the promotion of the new Discover Frome website updates and features and promoting the free FIND events identified over the Summer. Amber will now support the production of new Discover Frome maps as Ranger Mike restores them. They will also work with the resilience comms summer placement around a bus map project.

Tricia continues to support the Discover Frome Information Point volunteers.

Work experience and summer placements

We’ve had a number of work experience students this year, Sadie, and Yuri in January and Ashley in June who were all year 10’s. Although Ashley hadn’t anticipated joining our team, he quickly adapted - ably writing press releases, supporting the community borrowing scheme, and helping us recruit our summer placements.

From Easter and throughout the summer term, we’ve had Olivia with us on Monday mornings. She focused on gathering checking every last link needed for the new website. In the week leading up to the launch, she was joined by Joe. Both gained valuable experience in a workplace and thanks to their support, we were able to launch earlier than we would have otherwise.

This summer, Jo has joined us to support a number of film projects and campaigns, including the summer Discover Frome digital campaign. As this year’s candidates were so strong, and

our preferred candidate couldn't start until September, we've created an additional six-week placement. Eloise will join us later in the year to support the busy run-up to several major events. Macie, our Resilience comms placement, will be supporting the Bus Map project and the emerging Climate Action plan events.

Although this does represent an investment in time, we get the benefit of a fresh perspective, additional capacity and content, and they get experience so badly needed for the employment arena. We also try and instil good work practices in them helping them to have agency and confidence in a working environment as they move forward.