

Meeting	Full Council
Date	Tuesday 13th December 2022
Report Title	Communications Matters
Agenda Reference	7
Author	Kate New, Youth and Community Co-ordinator & Georgina Morgan-Denn, Chief Officer/Clerk & RFO

Recommendations

1. To note the report
2. To note the introduction of monthly e-News Bulletins using Mail Poet from January 2023
3. To agree to send an electronic Christmas Card and donate the budgeted funds £200 to charity
4. To agree to donate £200 to Swindon Foodbank

Background

1. Social Media Platforms and current statistics

Currently the Council has a Facebook account and an Instagram account. Facebook is updated with news stories/press releases from our website, posters for youth, community minibus, over 60s and other community events as well as regular updates from competitions and Memory Café. This platform is also regularly used to share information that may be of importance to residents (road closures, Avian Flu guidance etc.) from other establishments for example, Swindon Borough Council.

Social media has become a hugely popular medium for exchanging information to a wide audience. Therefore, the Council must keep their social media pages current to promote what it is offering or has done recently. The statistics below show social media is more popular amongst females, between the age ranges of 25 and 54 years. Harder to reach audience like those who would benefit from hearing about the Community Choices project for 2022/23 - Reducing Loneliness and Isolation – are not accessing the social media pages. In this instance we use alternative mediums such as hard copy leaflets, posters at strategically placed locations in the parish (surgeries, libraries, clubs, noticeboards).

Facebook is currently the most widely used platform by the Council and recently reached 3,000+ (Figure 1.). Posting on Instagram is more labour intensive as it only accepts a certain size image, whereas Facebook allows any type of image or video, of any shape or size. Below you will see the audience and number of followers of each platform (Figure 2.). Upon attendee and parent feedback only the youth events have been viewed on Instagram, therefore it is important to keep this platform updated with regular youth information such as events and information. But keep Facebook up to date with all information/shares and events.



Figure 1. Views over the last week, showing that most views happen over the weekend.



Figure 2. Audience and followers of each social media platform.

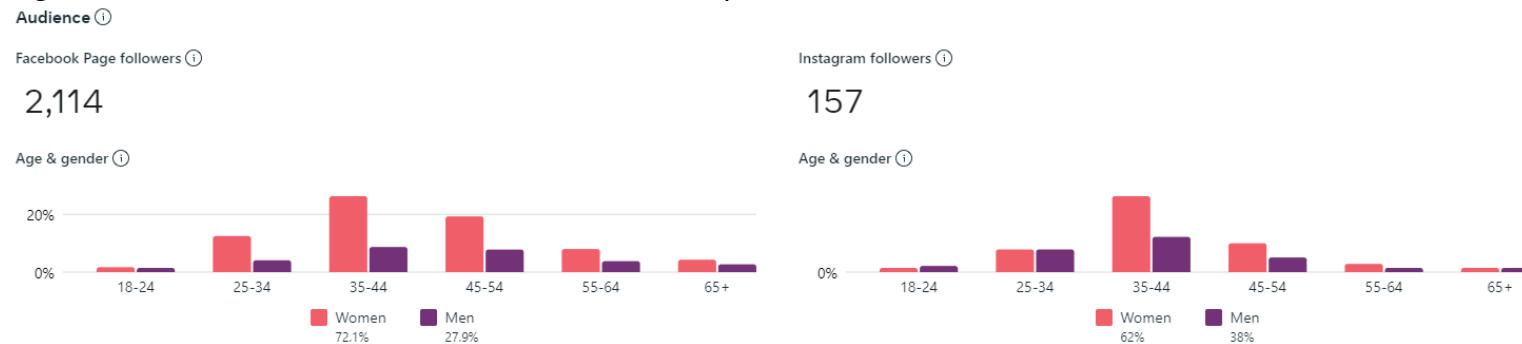


Figure 3. Showing how many people Facebook has reached over the past 12 months.



Figure 3. shows how many people were reached during the past year. This has dropped by over 25%, however, this is likely due to people returning to work post pandemic and still shows a high level of interaction.

Due to the times that most people are viewing the platforms, it is vital that posts are appearing over the weekends to ensure they have time to view the events and absorb the information. The larger spikes in outreach have been back of the Reducing Loneliness and Isolation events, for example the parent/guardian toddler Jungle Kingdom event, Murder Mystery/ Quiz Nights, The Big Haydon Wick Jubilee Lunch and Memory Café updates.



The research shows that to create more interaction on social media, asking for opinions and 'this is what we have seen, show us what you have seen' type posts are a very good. Also putting faces to names are great engagement tools and breaks down barriers when residents get to know who their Council is. There plans to commence a 'meet the team' with weekly introductions, of staff members / councillors, who they are, their role in the Council, what they enjoy etc. mean that people start to see that it is not 'just' an organisation but actual people they can get to know and approach if they feel they want or need to.

2. Monthly E-News Bulletins

The introduction of an E-News Bulletin via a platform that residents can sign up to will be a vital tool to reach wider audiences. They will ensure people who subscribe to the service, are kept up to date with important news and events that are happening within the community. Parish residents already receive the hard copy 'Haydon Wick Living' magazine three times a year is a perfect way for events to be advertised as well as local businesses and updates on what the Council has provided during the previous three/four months. However, four months is a long time, whereas monthly reminders and updates may prove more helpful especially to certain audiences.

Over 85% of the UK's adult population have an active email address, therefore, being able to provide monthly updates via this method would potentially reach the most people, this doesn't take into consideration young people, who are known to have an email address either through their place of education or personal. Being able to sign up to monthly bulletins would mean people can receive the email privately. As is obvious from the data above, there are very few young people following the Council's social media platforms. This may be due to the stigma and "not being cool" that comes with having their 'local Council' on their social media account. This way, young people could also sign up to receive the bulletin but don't have to tell their friends or peers. In general, people tend to check their emails regularly or get notifications of new emails, which would suggest people would see their bulletin arrive.

Bulletin Platforms

Research was carried out to find the most suitable platform to create a bulletin. Below is a comparison between three that are widely recognised as reliable bulletin platforms.

Mail Poet seems the most sensible option to go with due to the ongoing support available to the staff at Haydon Wick Parish Council, as well as the many templates to choose from. Being able to edit, adjust and create using the same layout as the website and same media, will ensure the initial set up and continued running of the bulletin will run with ease.

A template is being developed and can simply be edited each month. The production of the bulletin will not be time consuming or labour intensive and link to existing news stories that are already on our website.

At the bottom of every bulletin there is an unsubscribe button which easily enables subscribers to stop receiving these bulletins. A campaign to sign up to the bulletins will commence as soon as possible with a simple sign-up button on the website which we will advertise on social media, notice boards, emails and through our website. Along with this, people can provide staff with their details, and they can input their details for them if they don't have regular internet access. The subscribe and unsubscribe form will be compliant with general protection data protection regulations.



Platform Name	What they offer	Cost
Mail Chimp	• Creative assistant • Basic Reports and analytics • Pre-built templates • Standalone platform • Email support for the first 30 days • Access for one user • Up to 2,500 subscribers	Free
Mail Poet	• Basic Reports and analytics • Pre-built templates • Platform is a plug in via the Council's website and accessible for all web editors • All imagery from Council's media can be share on Mail Poet • Up to 5,000 emails per month • Up to 1,000 subscribers	Free
Email Octopus	• Reports available for 30 days • Standalone platform • Access for one user • Up to 2,500 subscribers • Up to 10,000 emails per month	Free

Draft design of the E-Newsletter Bulletins (mobile version)



Christmas Card 2022

Last year Council agreed to send an electronic Christmas message to all its contacts instead of branded cards. It is being recommended that Council does this again this year. There is £200 budget available, and this could be donated to Swindon Foodbank.