

Meeting	Community Development
Date	Tuesday 5th September 2023
Report Title	Communications Update
Agenda Reference	9
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Recommendations:

1. To note the report

Background:

Social Media Platforms and current statistics

Currently the Council's Facebook account is updated with news stories/press releases from our website, posters for youth events, community minibus, over 60's 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 such as Swindon Borough Council consultations and notices.

Social media has become a highly popular form of obtaining information for a wide audience and therefore, ensuring the Council keep this up to date means a large amount of people get to see what the Council is offering or have done recently. However, it appears it is more popular amongst females and between the age ranges of 25 and 54 years. These figures complement what a large percentage of the events and news is aimed at. For example, adults and parents of young people in the Parish. The Community Choices budget for 2023/24 is aimed at reducing loneliness and isolation and therefore the Council need to reach a wider audience as young people and the over 70s are the demographic suffering with loneliness and isolation. It is recognised that this audience do not access social media. However, using alternative mediums such as hard copy leaflets and posters in strategically placed locations within the parish (surgeries, libraries, clubs and noticeboards) this audience is beginning to be reached. Feedback from events aimed at this audience has shown that the Council's messages and adverts are successful.

Over the last year, the Council's Facebook page reach has increased by 66.5%. This is a large increase and provides evidence that new strategies are of benefit in capturing new audiences over social media. Since the last report in March 2023, once a post has been shared on social media, it is subsequently being shared onto other community pages, such as Haydon Wick Community Page and Swindon Community Noticeboard. This seems to be increasing the reach of the original post well.



Figure 1. shows a comparison between 1st January to 17th August 2023 and 17th May to 31st December 2022. It is clear from this, there have been some posts of major interest more recently, but also there is consistently a higher reach. The largest peaks are due to posts about the Haydon Wick Summer Spectacular and the other peaks coincide with our posts that are advertising free events or interactive posts. The figures, and number of attendees to events, suggest advertisements are getting are reaching the audience.

In the last six months the number of followers on both social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram) have increased. Facebook has increased by over 200 followers.

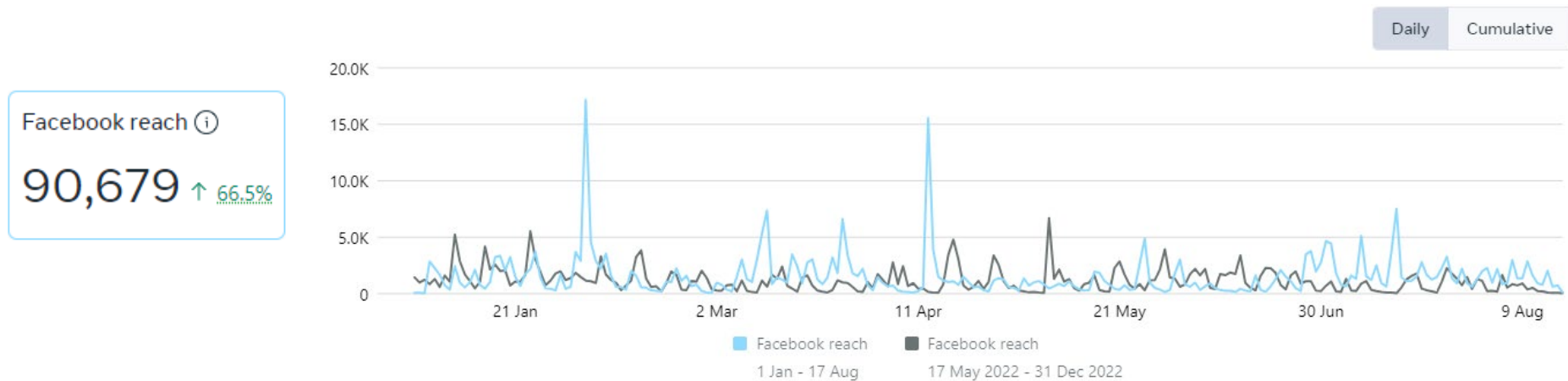


Figure 1. Facebook reach, comparison between 1st Jan to 17th Aug 2023 and 17th May to 31st Dec 2022.

News Bulletin

Mail Poet was chosen to be the platform the Council use for its monthly emailed news bulletin. The eighth edition has now been published (Friday 25th August). Since the first edition in February 2023, there are now 47 subscribers which has been steadily increasing each month with each communication about the bulletin. Feedback suggests the bulletin is a great way for people to become informed about the Council's latest news and upcoming meetings and events. Because of receiving positive feedback, subscription information can now be added to more of the Council's communications, for example: emails, posters and sent to networking contacts etc. By doing this, it may also be something the local schools and clubs can add to some of their communications.

The statistics from Mail Poet show that between 48% and 61% of subscribers are opening the email bulletin and between 14% and 34% are clicking on a link within the bulletin. Mail Poet rate this as 'excellent'.



At the bottom of the bulletin, there is an unsubscribe button which enables people to easily unsubscribe if they are not finding the bulletin of any importance to them. So far, no one has done this.

Website

Website content is being regularly refreshed and regular updates appear on Councillor Attendance, Meetings, Finance, News. Most recently a new page on the Council's website 'Maintenance Schedules' went live. This is regularly updated with the most current grass cutting and hedge and shrub bed maintenance schedules. Feedback from social media suggests it is a very useful and informative tool for the public to use.

Other Advertising

Posters are regularly being spread in a variety of ways across the Parish, through school newsletters, noticeboards and most recently (feedback suggests) word of mouth.

There is a list available to everybody to confirm all the contacts we send our posters and publicity to. This is updated regularly and available to all staff who wish to advertise, send press releases or network.