

Minutes from the meeting of the Communications Strategy Group held on Thursday 26th November 2020 at 2:00pm in the Council Chamber, Buckingham.

Present: Cllr. R. Ahmed
Cllr. M. Cole JP
Cllr. M. Gateley
Cllr. J. Harvey
Cllr. R. Newell
Cllr. M. Smith
Cllr. Strain-Clark

In Attendance: Mrs. L. Stubbs – Communications Clerk
Mr. P. Hodson – Town Clerk
Ms. B. Dowden – Apprentice Office Administrator
Cllr. T. Bloomfield

No members of the public attended and so there was no public session

830/20 **Apologies for Absence**

Members **RESOLVED** to receive and accept apologies from Cllr. Newell for being unable to attend the full meeting.

831/20 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

832/20 **Meeting Notes**

Members **RESOLVED** to agree notes of previous meeting, Thursday 3rd September 2020 and advisory notes from Thursday 15th October 2020.

833/20 **Membership**

Cllr. Gateley welcomed new members Cllr. Ahmed, Cllr. Cole JP and returning Cllr. Smith. Each Councillor's membership was welcomed not only to reduce the chance of the sub-committee meetings being inquorate but also for the benefit of more input from a wider group.

Cllr. Cole joined the meeting at 2.05pm

834/20 **Newsletter Review**

834.1 As the edition had not yet been circulated, positive feedback from councillors was based on the content of the digital version seen online. Cllr. Harvey noted that the Autumn 2020 edition was not yet on the publicity page of the website.

ACTION: OFFICE APPRENTICE

CSG/05/20

834.2 The delivery process will be reviewed at the next meeting.

834.3 Cllr. Ahmed agreed to record the audio version of the Winter 2020 newsletter.

ACTION: COUNCILLOR AHMED

834.4 Cllr. Cole questioned the additional £500 budget rise during 2020-2021, which would cover an additional 2,300 copies of the newsletter. Cllr. Gateley explained that the cost would be for 500 additional newsletters per quarter.

Cllr. Harvey propose, Cllr. Smith seconded and members **AGREED** unanimously to accept the report recommendation.

It is **RECOMMENDED** the graphic, printing and delivery contracts for the newsletter go out to tender in early 2021, when current contracts expire.

ACTION: COMMUNICATIONS CLERK

835/20 Future Newsletter

835.1 Members **AGREED** the following articles and authors for the Spring 2021 edition:

Article	Authors	Max. Word Count	Page numbers
Front Cover – Buckingham Survey	Louise/Bethanie	n/a	1 (1 page)
Message from your Mayor	Geraldine	300	2 (1 page)
Annual Town Meeting	Nina	300	3 (1 page)
Buckingham Survey	Paul/Sheena/Louise	600	4 and 5 (2 pages)
Past Events	Amanda/Sam/Emma/Bethanie	900	6, 7 and 8 (3 pages)
Future Events	Amanda	175	9 (1/2 page)
Long Term Grants (Old Gaol)	Mike/Paul	200	9 (1/2 page)
Town Commission Action Forum and identifying trees	Nina/Ruth	450	10 and 11 (1 1/2 page)
Homelessness	Margaret	200	11 (1/2 page)
Pontio	Vice-Chancellor via Hannah (UoB)	200	12 (1/2 page)
Covid-19 Update	Louise	175	12 (1/2 page)
Council Tax Budget Infographic	Claire	n/a	13 (1 page)
Standing for Election and voting	Louise	300	14 (3/4 page)
Town Councillors Contact Information	Bethanie	n/a	14 & 15 (1 & 1/4 page)
Back Cover – Future Events or Important Covid-19 Numbers	Bethanie	n/a	16 (1 page)

Members discussed possible options for the front cover, including a simple large print phrase such as ‘this affects you’ or the use of an annotated map of Buckingham.

Members **AGREED** to ask Cllr. G Collins to include a mention of the neighbourhood plan in the Message from your Mayor.

ACTION: COMMUNICATIONS CLERK, CLLR COLLINS

Members felt the Annual Town Meeting article could include Plan A and Plan B options for how to take part, to cover possible Coronavirus related restrictions in March 2021.

ACTION: COMMITTEE CLERK

Members **AGREED** that the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Buckingham should be invited to use the Pontio space to write an article about future town and gown relationships.

ACTION: VICE-CHANCELLOR

835.2/20 Members **AGREED** to move the remaining suggested articles and a piece on local democracy week to the Summer 2021 edition.

ACTION: COMMUNICATIONS CLERK

Cllr. Bloomfield joined the meeting at 2.35pm.

836/20 Audio Newsletter

Cllr. Smith **AGREED** to record the audio version of the Spring 2021 edition. Officers to coordinate with Cllr. Smith a suitable time and equipment to use in the office.

ACTION: CLLR. SMITH, COMMUNICATIONS CLERK

837/20 Ongoing Development of Existing Website

837.1 The Communications Clerk gave a verbal update on changes to the Town Council website, largely related to Coronavirus restrictions.

837.2 The Communications Clerk gave a verbal update on changes to the Tourist Information Centre website, focused on changes to local businesses related to the November restrictions and Tier 2 changes, including a list of local shops that offer delivery for use by Buckinghamshire Council. Overall the website is performing well.

Cllr. Harvey asked whether a town voucher system to be purchased through the website would be possible before Christmas. The Town Clerk explained that town vouchers had been considered but it wasn’t possible to arrange anything in time, as the structure and administration of vouchers redeemable in many shops was complex and require careful planning. The Town Clerk **AGREED** to report back to the Town Centre and Events Committee about the idea at a later date.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The Town Clerk also gave an update on the raffle which will be running in January to encourage residents to shop locally after Christmas, funded with Community Board Funding. Additionally, an online local gift guide advent calendar which will highlight a local shop, service or product daily through December on the Town Council’s social media. This has been organised with local traders by the Tourist Information Centre Supervisor.

CSG/05/20

Cllr. Ahmed proposed and members **AGREED** that all members be asked to promote the gift guide through their own social media accounts.

ACTION: COMMUNICATIONS CLERK

838/20 Communications Strategy Group Budget Review

The rationale for the rise in the Website Operation & Provision (4041/102) budget was discussed.

Cllr. Harvey proposed, Cllr. Strain-Clark seconded and Members **AGREED** unanimously the following report recommendations:

It is **RECOMMENDED** that the **4032/102 Publicity** budget is increased to £7,598 to allow for a rise in printing costs and the graphic design of the newsletter, both due to retender in March 2021, and the annual payment for online social media management.

b) It is **RECOMMENDED** that the **901/9030 Earmarked Reserves/Tourism Leaflets** budget for CSG remains the same to accommodate any additional printing of new leaflets over the next year.

c) It is **RECOMMENDED** that the **4041/102 Website Operation & Provision** be raised to £5,000 to accommodate any changes in website maintenance costs as the result of retendering in April 2021.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

839/20 Social Media Annual Review

Members discussed the huge success of the Buckingham Town Markets social media accounts, and asked that the Markets Manager be congratulated on their success. It was notable that the Markets Manager deployed particular tactics for growth of social media accounts very well, including posting daily and engaging with other users, for a single purpose.

The Communications Clerk described how techniques that worked well over the year for particular accounts had been analysed and applied to other accounts where appropriate. These including daily posting for most accounts and fun responsive content, including the upcoming 'Where's Santa?'

In the long term the ability of the Town Council's main accounts to create a consistent tone, whilst being contributed to by multiple officers, and covering a wide variety of topics would be aided through the use of a better social media manager product. Such products save time and allow an oversight and responsiveness that it's not possible to manage with the current level of resources.

Members **AGREED** that the Communications Clerk should request the social media handles of all Councillors for use by Officers.

ACTION: COMMUNICATIONS CLERK

Members noted the report.

840/20 Press Releases

Members noted the report.

841/20 Chair's Items

Cllr. Gateley spoke about the positive impact having additional members as part of the Communications Strategy Group had made to the discussion throughout the meeting.

842/20 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 14th January 2pm via Zoom.

PRIVATE SESSION

843/20 Social Media Manager

Cllr. Gateley proposed, Cllr. Smith seconded and members unanimously **AGREED** the following report recommendations:

It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Plastic Free Buckingham Facebook page be deleted.
ACTION: COMMITTEE CLERK/COMMUNICATIONS CLERK

It is **RECOMMENDED** that a Hootsuite Team account, costing £1,188 per annum is purchased using **4041/102 Website Provision and Operation** budget.
ACTION: DEPUTY TOWN CLERK

It is **RECOMMENDED** that the 2021/2022 Precept include a cost of £1,188 per annum to pay for continued use of the Hootsuite Team account, to be paid for from the **4032/102 Publicity** budget.
ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The meeting ended at 3:14pm.

Clerk's note: by agreement of the Chair, Cllr. Bloomfield will become a member of the Communications Strategy Group from the next meeting.

Chair

Date