

Communications Working Group – Update January 2023

Cllr Steve Holder (Chair)

Cllr Marcus Harris

Cllr Dan Beauchamp

Cllr George Newcome

Jennifer Green – Community, Tourism & Business Development Officer

Mr Nick Sandall

Mrs Ailsa McCarthy

Responsibility – to set the communications strategy both internally and externally for the town council reporting back to full council.

The starting point (group set up in 2020):

- Perception of Wallingford Town Council (WTC) communication was not particularly positive.
- Communications were viewed as negative or defensive.
- People want better engagement from the council as a public body.

What has been done:

- The rate of communications output has increased significantly through Facebook, twitter and the website. We've also set up an Instagram page.
- Buffer setup up to allow scheduling of posts.
- Website has been updated to act as a central point for our communications and for those who do not follow our other modes of communication. This website is now meeting the accessible requirements. A review of the website has been undertaken to make sure everything is linking and working properly.
- Trial of a regular message from the Mayor in Window on Wallingford.
- Meeting minutes now produced promptly and put on the website as draft.
- Review of the logo hierarchy Town Council Crest, Portcullis and W we now have a set standard for use of these in the office.
- Coms group now have a resolution from council to sign off use of the portcullis logo to aid more timely use for outside parties who are seen as groups that Wallingford Town Council wish to partner with.
- Meeting accessibility: We have trialled OWL and are now going to trial just a normal conference camera and microphones as Frome town council do to stream our meetings. We also trialled live streaming technology with Cloudy IT in October with a small audience.
- Signed off the new councillor's inductions process. Cllr Hendrie is our first Councillor to use this format.

- To rekindle our relationships with our twinned towns. Our twin towns are Bad-Wurzach in Germany and Luxeuil le Bains in France who came over for the Jubilee weekend in 2022.
- Exit interviews happen for Councillors and officers to make sure learnings are taken forward.
- Press Releases we now have a format so news can be produced and distributed in a timely manner.
- Relunched the town e-newsletter which will be published as a minimum 3 times per year. This is also available in the Town Information Centre for those without access to internet.
- Estate agents and marketing suites asked to provide every new resident moving into Wallingford with one of the town welcome packs already available in the town information centre.
- Welcome pack reviewed and updated.
- Working Groups have a page on the website to enable an update and areas working on to improve awareness of work being delivered.
- More interaction with Councillors – ‘Meet the Councillors’ presence at the OX10 Community Day in September 2022, and presence at ‘Wallingford for All’ day in February 2023. Plans for new town councillors in May to have presence on Wallingford Radio, with a 10 questions introduction.
- Facebook Events to be created for all WTC meetings. The Facebook feed algorithm is not ideal for time sensitive information. If an event is posted members of the public would be reminded by FB at the appropriate time.

Longer Term - Next Steps

- Wallingford Business Forum. This is specific to a particular subsection of people in Wallingford but is a really useful tool for WTC to engage with the Business community. We need to understand if this forum is still alive.
- Media Relations and social media Policy to be updated reviewed and, where appropriate, updated.
- To review our content schedule so that we both vary our content (to maintain interest) but also ensure that our different communication tools are supporting each other.
- Cllr Beatty set up a YouTube channel and has a video production of the town need to review how best it can be reinstated and used.