

## STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Monday, 23 January 2023

**Title:** Community Engagement Report

**Contact Officer:** Communications & Community Engagement Officer - Polly Inness

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### **Background**

With elections forthcoming the focus of this report is on how the Council engages with the community over the next few months and generate feedback and information in a way that is meaningful and useful for both re-elected councillors and those that that will be new members in May.

There are also items concerning the Town Hall window community use and town twinning added by the Deputy Town Clerk.

### **Current Situation**

#### Annual Residents' Survey

The survey will be tweaked this year to include a "Don't know/do not use service" box as suggested by some of those who responded to last year's survey.

It is suggested that rather focusing on individual projects or planned spending, the survey focuses directly on the Town Council's Core services and explains these in more detail where needed. For example, people often do not recognise what civic and community events are, so a brief list would be helpful.

#### Voice Of Witney

With strict GDPR controls in place, it is suggested the Council revisits, The Voice Of Witney Mailing list and probably call it something else as a similarly named Facebook page now exists and there shouldn't be any association with any page other than the Council's own.

The Council can use Mail Chimp to generate sign up forms on social media and its website and collect emails this way and through submissions by email.

#### Councillor Recruitment

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) is running a campaign to encourage residents to stand as councillors called, "MAKE A CHANGE BECOME A COUNCILLOR".

This recruitment drive for councillors- will be one of the displays in the Admin Office (not community) window.

Officers will include the wording from NALC in the display but, think it would be more attractive if slightly less formal. Officers would like to ask all current members to contribute with why they became councillors, which committees they are on, what the committees do. How much are they paid? What they love most about being a councillor and finally – the big question? Why don't they fix potholes? A bit of fun but with a serious purpose. An email will be sent to all councillors shortly.

#### Town Hall Window – Community Use Requests

Members will recall that an area of the Town Council's Reception window has been ringfenced for the use of Community Groups and organisations. The criteria, as agreed at Council is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

The Council has received two requests which fall outside of these criteria.

The first is from the Rotary Club of Witney who have asked to use the window for two months to highlight the 'Rotary Wrap Up Project' in 2023. Letter attached as Appendix 2.

The second is from Witney Blanket Hall who have asked for a small area, or an A3 frame, in which they could provide posters for their upcoming events.

#### Town Twinning - Le Touquet Airport

A meeting has taken place with airport representatives, twinning and the Deputy Mayor concerning the decision to rename the airport after Her late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. The Airport is hoping to reinvigorate the links between the twinned towns. Any further updates may be provided by the Chair, if appropriate.

#### **Environmental impact**

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

#### **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

The Council must be mindful not to miss any Witney residents as part of the newsletter/satisfaction survey canvas.

The Council has criteria in place for the use of the Town Hall window, anything going against these may start a precedent.

**Financial implications**

Described here or as stated in the report above.

- There are no direct costs associated to the contents of this report.

**Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. Whether to allow the requests for the use of the Town Hall Reception window.