

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 18 September 2023

Title: Communications Report

Contact Officer: Communications & Community Engagement Officer

Background

The purpose of this report is to update members on communications from the Council and any projects which are related to this.

Current Situation

Councillor Social Media Communications

Members are reminded that they are elected Councillors and therefore must adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct, Civility & Respect Pledge and the Nolan Principles of Public Life in all communications. Details on all of the above, along with the Council's Social Media Policy was included in the Councillor Induction given to Councillors in May 2023.

Witney Town Council is a 'corporate body' to which all Councillors, irrespective of political party are members, elected to serve and make improvements for the good of the community. Anything seen to be against this aim on any platform will lead to a poor perception of the Council and damage its reputation.

The Local Government Association offers some excellent guidance on Digital Citizenship such as how to keep your Councillor and family lives separate, stay safe online, manage trolling and stay within the law. This is attached as **Appendix A**.

One thing that has arisen and has been noted is the number of fake and parody accounts on X (Twitter) in particular. It may help residents to identify genuine councillor Facebook accounts if they share some uniformity and a suggested format might be as simple as Cllr first name, last name.

A separate page is the best way to keep your personal content private – you can apply different privacy controls to this while keeping your councillor page open to all.

Digital Signage

The digital signage for the Town Hall window has been loaded with test content and is working well. There is a screen format that all information published needs to be produced in so that it displays correctly, which is that of a mobile phone screen. It will go live as soon as the window transfers are in place.

Councillors in the Cafe

The Town Council will continue to advertise these as the first Saturday of every month. It would be beneficial if there is a single format social media post available so that all councillors are sharing a consistent message. Officers can create this with the WTC logo so that it is instantly recognisable and branded if Councillors agree.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 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.

Financial implications

➤ There are no financial implications.

Recommendations

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

1. To note the guidance on Councillor communications.