

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: 15 March 2021

Title: Communications & Community Engagement Report

Contact Officer: Communications & Community Engagement Officer -Polly Inness

Background

To provide a brief update on Communications and Community Engagement

Current Situation

This report is intended to remind councillors of opportunities for community engagement coming up and ascertain what is going ahead in 2021, COVID-19 permitting.

In Bloom April - May

The Council has agreed to enter 2 categories in this year's Thames & Chiltern In Bloom competition. The Leys and Tower Hill Cemetery, at a cost of £50 each.

Diana Blackman of Witney Horticultural Society can take over the planting of the raised bed by Langdale Hall as they had arranged to do last year. This is the one opposite the Dry Cleaner and Coffee shop.

Banners and notices for the Flower Beds dedicated the planting to honouring the local volunteer groups and NHS for their work during the coronavirus pandemic, as agreed in minute SC290 Floral Displays for 2021 should be purchased in time for NHS Day in June.

Heritage Open Day 10-19 September

The theme this year is Edible England. Registration is now open.

From the Heritage Open Day website: "Empty the larder, preheat the oven, and set the table - our theme for 2021 is Edible England. From woodland foraging to factory floor, forgotten recipes to regional delicacies, we're asking our festival community to explore the past, present, and future of our culinary heritage and culture."

This could be an opportunity to work in partnership with a local attraction or with local food businesses to recreate an ancient local recipe, using an ingredient that has gone out of

fashion, or sharing a local/regional speciality. Alternatively, we could explore the diversity in our town with something like a world food market. How many of our favourite recipes and ingredients originate from abroad and have come to us as a result of the movement of people, trade, travel and the British Empire? This theme would also fit well with our allotments and with local hospitality business recovery.

Car Free Day 22 September

A brief report will be submitted to Climate, Biodiversity and Planning for 20th April following this committee's decision to hold the event in September.

Christmas Competitions

Which of the Christmas Competitions would the council like to run this year, COVID-19 Permitting? Moving the competitions out of the schools and online was very successful and this might be a better way to engage then via schools only.

Christmas Card

Christmas Light (there has been no tender issued yet so a light may not be an option)

Mayor's Carols cover

HM the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June 2022

Would the Councillors like to form a Task and Finish Group to organise events for this? The Jubilee celebrations will take place over 4 days in June, with a delayed end of May Bank Holiday moved to Thurs 2nd June and an additional Bank Holiday on Friday 3rd leading into the weekend. There is lots of information in archives of activities we have undertaken on previous Royal events which can be presented to the Councillors at a later date.

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.

Financial implications

There are entry fees of £50 each for the In Bloom categories.

Recommendations

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

1. Does the Council give permission to Horticultural Society to plant the flower bed at Langdale
2. Does the Council wish to run a community engagement event for HOD this year and what should that be?
3. Decide which Christmas competitions we will run, the judging and prizes.
4. Do the Council want to form a Task and Finish group to organise the Platinum Jubilee celebrations. If yes, membership can be decided at the Annual Council Meeting.