

Communications Working Group

Meeting notes 18.6.24

Present: Kim, Colin, Liz

- Group set itself the following objectives:
 - i) To communicate effectively what APC does and doesn't do for the community;
 - ii) To encourage a managed 2-way communication with residents, while protecting Clerk and Councillors from abuse
 - iii) To encourage, over time, residents to volunteer and so build a stronger community.
- Group looked for low cost/no cost solutions
- Accepted that our existing tools to communicate out are probably the right ones: website, Facebook, The Fountain, noticeboards, occasionally door-to-door leaflets, meetings. Briefly considered e-newsletters but not considered viable for APC
 - **Recommendation: keep on doing this but use Facebook more often for short targeted updates and keep the website up-to-date**
 - **Recommendation: clerk will use a 'standard response' whenever a new matter is brought to the Council's attention which acknowledges the point and suggests the writer attends the next meeting etc. (wording to TBA by the WG)**
 - **Recommendation: a simple comms policy setting out which platform is appropriate when and who can access it**

[Clerk notes that her time needs to be considered and will vary from week to week. Also, she suggests that matters to be covered continue to be agreed as often as possible at monthly meetings. And notes that as many people sending photos as possible really helps!]

- Discussed how to make these platforms more engaging – in particular Facebook.
 - **Recommendation: volunteer councillors to take turns to prepare a short (60 second) video to be released monthly. For ideas on what to cover see below.** Nothing fancy, can be hand-held phone camera looking round the Pavilion for example. Helps also raise the profile of who you are.
 - Ask for feedback and make it easy for people to contact us in a uniform/controlled way
Recommendation: adopt a feedback/comment/suggestions form which will be regularly tagged on to Facebook postings. This avoids anyone (especially the clerk) getting into public comments, however innocuous

It would be hoped that better, more-frequent 2-way communication will help to build engagement with the wider community in the village. The added advantage then being, when we come to need volunteers, the conversation is already started. This led us on to thinking about 'engagement' in the wider sense for the PC. Better communication is certainly step one but a longer-term look at communication policy/strategy might go on to look at how to encourage volunteering in the village.

Also briefly discussed 'advertising' better what the PC is doing by making ourselves more visible

Eg hi-vis jackets with 'working on behalf of Alderbury Parish Council' when Mel or Alex, say, is working at the Oakwood amenity area, or Mike is clearing glass from the slide, or Elaine is litter picking the recreation ground. If this seems too much, perhaps a simple portable A-frame sign?

- **Recommendation: improve visibility of councillors volunteering in the community above and beyond attending meetings**

What we could be talking about (some of these might be appropriate for video)

- Meeting decisions – a simple round up of the meeting like for the Fountain but on video
- On-going projects eg SID and speed watch, recreation ground and Pavilion, wildlife areas
- What we do
- What we don't do
- How we spend your money

The Comms WG can come up with a list of topics