

Communications Group Agenda 31st March 2022 – 8.00PM

AGENDA ITEMS

- 1) **Present:** Councillor Jose Castro (JC), Councillor Stuart McPhee (SM), Councillor Paddy Riordan (PR), Councillor Peter Spearink (PS), Councillor Matt Clifton (MC)
Apologies: Resident David George (DG)
- 2) **Minutes of previous meeting 24th February 2022 – 8.00PM** **FOR NOTING**
The group looked into points that had been actioned (Addition to the Village Update, arranging collation for inserts in subsequent Village Updates, a new Village Update schedule, checking earlier publication of the Annual Report, instructions for the Annual Report sent to Councillors and Office, approval of articles for the Downs Mail). The only point that is still pending is exploring possibilities for the SEHT awards celebration.
- 3) **New possible additions to the group.** **FOR NOTING**
The group has requested that MC and DG join the group officially (At the time of typing these minutes, this has been already ratified by Full Council).
- 4) **The Annual Report** **ACTIONS NEEDED**
This item has to be cancelled from the Agenda. PR, having just returned from a previous Finance & Strategy Group meeting, comments that the Office, due to ongoing staffing problems, are unable to meet the deadlines to submit the required financial information for the Annual Report. F&S group are requesting swapping the Annual Report and Village Update issues. The group agrees but will need urgent planning of articles that cannot be discussed during the meeting as they need some thought and preparation. JC to speak at Full Council regarding the present situation and will propose a new schedule of publications for the remainder of the year.
- 5) **The Downs Mail** **FOR NOTING**
Simon Finlay, editor of the Downs Mail will be visiting us. Q&A session.
(This point was dealt with at the very beginning of the meeting, when PR had not yet arrived from a previous F&S meeting)
SF explained to the group how the publications work and provided examples from other councils. Also spoke about the reach, including internet reach. MC requested information about typesetting and about design in the webpage. JC requested information about timing, distribution of hardcopies and control of what was being published.
SF expressed that this collaboration also opened a direct line with them so that we could contact and use the Downs Mail should there be a need to.
Publications will be in colour, on the right side as requested and will also go to their website. They will increase the distribution points in Staplehurst. Articles are also published in their Facebook page. We were encouraged to subscribe to it so that we will be able to share these publications in our social media, too.
SF requested our Logo so that they can start working on it and having a frame for our articles.
- 6) **Approval of Youth Club appeal for volunteers and publicity posters** **FOR NOTING**
Discussion about a poster to appeal for volunteers for the Youth Club. JC and SM showed different models. MC, in his expertise, recommended the poster with the red background. The group decided to go for this option. The contents of the poster could be modified if necessary to adapt to requirements.
- 7) **Grants and Sponsorship** **ACTIONS NEEDED**
Following the recent success of the Youth Club group searching for grants, JC requests the group to help finding grants for the Communications Group, particularly in view to sponsor a digital display board. PR suggested exploring the possibility of contacting the new manager at Sainsbury's again. SM will also look for grants for the CG in his search for the Youth Club group, too. MC considered that a digital display board could be an easy target for vandalism and to explore all possibilities carefully.
- 8) **KALC Award celebration** **ACTIONS NEEDED**
The group agreed that the arrival of the good weather and the improved situation with the Pandemic make it possible to host a celebration. PR to explore different possibilities to celebrate the achievements and awards of the SEHT.

9) Communications Strategy: A logo

ACTIONS NEEDED

For a while the Communications Groups have been exploring a communications strategy. With the addition of MA to the CG, it seems a good idea to bring part of that communications strategy forward. A good communications strategy is complex and we, as a Council, tick many boxes in how we communicate with the public but one clear area that we lack is a logo.

The importance of the logo has also become evident when the Downs Mail editor, at the beginning of the meeting, has requested our Logo to start working on it ahead of our articles being published.

MC is to speak at the next Full Council meeting requesting verbal approval about the intentions to start working on a suitable logo for the Village. For this we feel that the starting point would be through public consultation as a means to exploring the sentiment of the residents and what ideas they identify the village with.

10) Year targets:

- a) **KALC Award celebration**
- b) **Digital display board**
- c) **Communications Strategy**
- d) **A Welcome Pack**
- e) **Additional information in website:**
 - i) **Village information (maps and groups)**
 - ii) **Consultations (available and past)**
 - iii) **Contacts (improve the available leaflet)**
 - iv) **Who's who tree**

11) AOB:

FOR FULL COUNCIL APPROVAL

We discussed the use of social media and the reach of the different media that the PC uses, the target audience of each one. As we have the addition of MC to the group, with a solid expertise in this area, and also due to the increase pressure that the PC Office is under due to short staffing, the group is offering to take control of the Instagram account.

12) Next meeting date: Thursday, 28th April