

Community Services Committee

Report Title:	Communications and Community Engagement
Meeting Date:	16 July 2024
Contact Officer:	Cassie Pinnells, Community Services Manager

Purpose of the Report

1. To receive a report on Town Council communications and community engagement.

Compliments & Complaints

From 1 October 2023 – 30 June 2024

Thame Town Council

Verbal Compliments	No.	Verbal Complaints	No.
121 Bus	5	121 Bus	5
Thame Official Guide	1	Hedge Trimming	1
Phone box refurbishment	2	U3A Bench	1
Hedge trimming	1	Grass Cutting	6
Remembrance Service	4	Graffiti in Cuttlebrook	1
Churchyard maintenance	2	Money spent on Remembrance screen	1
Christmas tree	2	Xmas lights - many not working and Thame's looking sad	7
Nicest Council team ever! (Town Hall staff)	1	Money spent on Christmas lights	1
Maintenance of Elms Park	1		
Town Guide	4		
Total	23		23

South Oxfordshire District Council

Verbal Compliments	No.	Verbal Complaints	No.
		Dog Fouling	5
		Market House toilets filthy	5
Total	0		10

Oxfordshire County Council

Verbal Compliments	No.	Verbal Complaints	No.
		Uneven pavements	9
		Potholes	24
Total	0		33

Social Media

2. Current figures show Thame Town Council has:
 - Facebook followers – 2.2k up from 2.1k in November 2023
 - Instagram followers – 484 up from 408 in November 2023
3. Individual event sites have:
 - Thame Town Awards – 433 likes, 470 followers
 - Taste of Thame – 699 likes, 937 followers (Facebook), 339 followers (Insta)
 - Thame Art Crawl – 564 likes, 707 followers (Facebook)
 - Thame Local Produce Market – 805 likes, 898 followers (Facebook), 1,015 followers (Insta)
4. Since February, the top five posts on TTC's Facebook page have been:
 - Completion of Youth Memorial refurbishment – 164 likes (4 June)
 - Lindsey's 40 years of service - 106 likes (24 May)
 - Elms Park Refurbishment plans – 56 likes (16 April)
 - Thame Carnival winners – 51 likes (15 June)
 - New mayor and deputy – 50 likes (14 May)
5. Since February, TTC's top ten posts shared to Love Thame, a local site with 16.6k followers, have been:
 - Thame Town Council wins Carnival Parade – 157 likes (15 June)
 - Windrush/Johnny Smythe story – 121 likes (22 June)
 - Thank you to Kevin for defibrillator work – 121 likes (1 July)
 - Chinook flyover, with video – 98 likes (11 June)
 - Teaser about possible chinook flyover – 73 likes (10 June)

Newsletter

6. Current figures show Thame Town Council currently has 1457 weekly newsletter subscribers up from 1298 in November 2023.
7. Since mid-May, the newsletter has been handled by the relief Communications and Events Officer covering maternity leave.
8. The format of the newsletter has been slightly altered to include a navigation menu at the top of each edition. To improve accessibility (DDA compliance), the font size has been increased and text has been aligned to the left of the page. A printed copy of the main stories from each newsletter is also now displayed at Montesson Square and in the library.
9. In an effort to increase subscriber numbers, a link to each edition of the newsletter is now posted on social media every Friday, encouraging people to read and subscribe.

10. The decision was made in July, to cease publication of the monthly business newsletter, and instead, incorporate weekly Thame-focused business news in the regular weekly newsletter.

Website

11. In June, the Thame Town Council home page was revamped (in-house). The relief Communications and Events Officer has also been working through the site, removing broken links and out-of-date content. Over the coming months, she will continue to clean up the site, update the overall look and feel, improve navigation, and implement measures to reduce the website's carbon footprint.

Town Guide

12. Work on the 2025 guide is set to commence by the end of July.

Councillors on the Market

13. Councillors held their first Community Stall on the Market on Tuesday 28th May 2024, with members of the public engaged and ten questions asked to Cllr Gilbert, Dawson and Dite. The Maintenance Team and Mayor's PA provided operational support. The next date is Tuesday 23rd July 2024, if any Councillor can provide an hour to cover the stall, please contact Cllr Gilbert and Cllr Dawson.

Additional Engagement

14. The most requested items at the Information Centre are bus timetables. As such, a TTC LinkTree was created to give users instant access to the 12 buses that currently service Thame. <https://linktr.ee/thamebuses> The link was launched on 25 June. It can be saved to computers and devices for easy access.
15. The bus links service was so well received, that on 1 July, a second LinkTree was launched, incorporating all public services from TTC, SODC, and OCC in an alphabetical list: <https://linktr.ee/thamepublicservices>
16. As of 8 July, over 1.5k unique users had viewed the Bus Timetables links and over 700 unique users had viewed the Public Services links.
17. Both links have generated valuable feedback from residents, namely for printed versions of the timetables to be easily accessible, and for an alphabetical list of all public services to be made available for those who do not use computers/devices.
18. As such, the TTC website homepage will soon provide a link to pdf copies of all timetables for printing at home, and the 2025 Town Guide will be revamped to provide an alphabetical list of all public services, noting the relevant councils and contact details. (Past editions have featured three separate lists – one for each council).

Legal Powers:

- Local Government Act 1972, Sections 142 and 144

Recommendation:

- i) To note the report.*