



BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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COMMUNICATIONS
STRATEGY GROUP

17/11/2020

Councillor,

You are summoned to a meeting of the **Communications Strategy Group** of Buckingham Town Council to be held on **Thursday 26th November 2020 at 2pm** online via Zoom, Meeting ID 871 2899 7691.

Residents are very welcome to ask questions or speak to Councillors at the start of the meeting in the usual way. Please email office@buckingham-tc.gov.uk or call 01280 816426 for the password to take part.

Mr. P. Hodson
Town Clerk

Please note that the meeting will be preceded by a Public Session in accordance with Standing Order 3.f, which will last for a maximum of 15 minutes.

1. Apologies for Absence

Members are asked to receive apologies from Members.

2. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of any personal or prejudicial interest under matters for consideration on this agenda in accordance with the Parish Councils (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2001.

3. Meeting Notes

To review and agree the minutes from the meeting Thursday 3rd September 2020, received at Full Council on the 5th October 2020.

To review and agree the advisory notes from the last meeting Thursday 15th October 2020.

Copy circulated previously

4. Membership

To welcome new members, Cllr. Ahmed, Cllr. Cole JP and Cllr. Smith to the Communications Strategy Group.

5. Newsletter Review

To review the production and delivery of the previous newsletter and identify key learning points from the production process and its look, including a discussion of:

- Quality of production & content
- Delivery
- Audio version
- Update of the costs of the newsletter

[Appendix A](#)



Twinned with Mouvaux, France;



Neukirchen Vluyn, Germany



Members are reminded when making decisions that the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010 requires Members to have due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who don't, and to foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who don't.

All Committee documents can be found on the Buckingham Town Council's website. Alternatively, the Clerk can send you a copy of any minutes, reports or other information. To do this, send a request using the contact details set out above.

6. Future Newsletter

To decide what we want to achieve with our next newsletter and outline the content.

[Appendix B](#)

7. Audio Newsletter

- To make a decision over who should record the audio copy of the Spring 2021 newsletter

8. Ongoing Development of Existing Websites

- To discuss the maintenance of the website and any improvements to be made.
- Tourist Information Centre Website

9. Communications Strategy Group Budget Review

To discuss all areas of the Communications Strategy Group budget

[CSG/69/20](#)

10. Social Media Annual Review

To discuss the performance and improvement of the Town Council's social media accounts.

[CSG/70/20](#)

11. Press Releases

A summary of the press releases authorised by Buckingham Town Council since the previous CSG meeting on 15th October 2020.

[Appendix C](#)

12. Chair's Items

13. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 14th January 2021

14. COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION

Exclusion of Public and Press

RECOMMENDED In terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, **RECOMMENDED** that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

15. Social Media Manager

To select a quote for an online social media manager.

CSG/71/20

To:
Cllr. R. Ahmed
Cllr. M. Cole JP
Cllr. G. Collins Town Mayor
Cllr. M. Gateley Chair
Cllr. J. Harvey
Cllr. R. Newell
Cllr. M. Smith
Cllr. C. Strain-Clark Vice-Chair

**BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY GROUP
THURSDAY 26th NOVEMBER 2020**

Contact Officer: Communications Clerk

Newsletter Costs (delayed from April 2020)

1. Recommendation:

It is **RECOMMENDED** the graphic, printing and delivery contracts for the newsletter go out to tender in early 2021, when current contracts expire.

2. Newsletter costs:

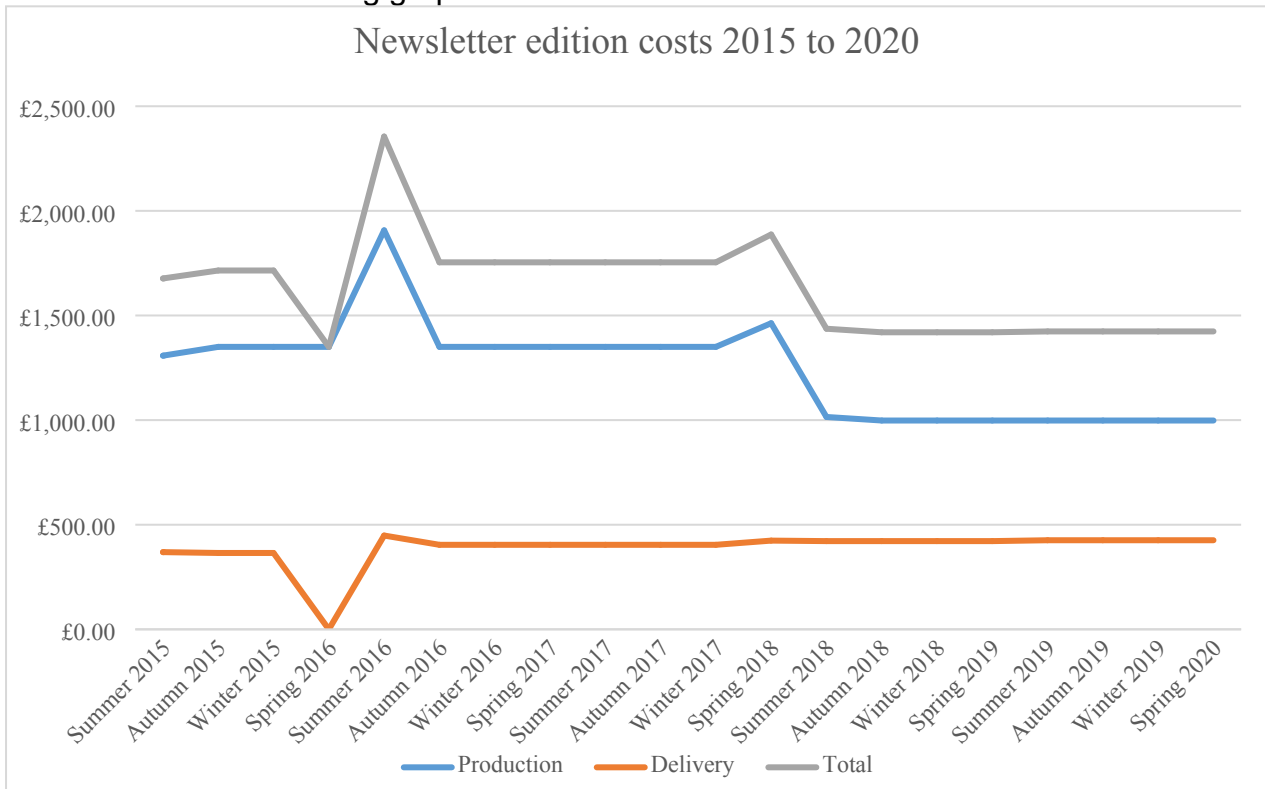
Edition	Design and Printing	Delivery	Total cost	Number of copies	Number of pages	Total price per unit
Summer 2019	£998.00	£425.81	£1,423.81	6,500	16	£0.219
Autumn 2019	£998.00	£425.81	£1,423.81	6,500	16	£0.219
Winter 2019	£998.00	£425.81	£1,423.81	6,500	16	£0.219
Spring 2020	£998.00	£425.81	£1,423.81	6,500	16	£0.219

2.1 Buckingham Town Council's fixed price contract with Black Dog design for the production and printing of the Newsletter ends in March 2021. The total cost of delivery by Life in Buckingham (now Best Area Magazines) is not fixed and has risen slightly over 2020.

The final cost for newsletter design, production and delivery in 2019/20 was **£5,695.24**, a very similar amount of the previous year. The newsletter is funded from the Publicity Budget (code 4032). The budget for 2019/20 was £6,000. This has been increased to £6,500 in 2020/21 due to the increase in the size of the town due to new housing developments requiring more newsletters to be printed for quarterly delivery. However, the impact of Coronavirus on all facets of life mean that this increase in population may be slower than originally anticipated.

2.2 In accordance with best practice, it is **RECOMMENDED** the graphic, printing and delivery contracts for the newsletter go out to tender in early 2021, when current contracts expire.

2.3 The following graphs show more detail about newsletter costs over time.



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Spring Newsletter 2021: article ideas

1. Usual Pages/Pages so Far

- (1) Front Cover – Buckingham Survey (for BNDP)
- (1) Mayor’s Message
- (3) Round up of past events (Pumpkin trail, Remembrance Sunday, Christmas Lights, Christmas Card contest, Christmas gift guide) *note: online only activities included as ‘events’ while it is not possible to hold traditional events.*
- (1 or ½) Promotion of future events (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise fair/event, other content TBD)
- (1¼) List of Councillors and Numbers/ Your Views Count (*Review this page layout*)
- (1) Events Diary – Back page as usual

2. Ideas, Suggestions & Previous Spring Articles (7¾ remaining pages)

- **Town Action Commission (min 762/20) (1 and 1/2 pages)** – *“publicise the updated Town Action Commission’s Action Plan with an accompanying article in the Spring newsletter on the identification of different tree species.”*
- **Long term grants (1 page)** – *Old Gaol*
- **Homelessness Prevention Forum (min 766/20) (1/2 page)** - *Cllr. Gateley suggested as author*
- **Annual Town Meeting (1 page)** (*featured in previous Spring Newsletters*)
- **Council Tax budget infographic (1 page)** (*featured in previous Spring Newsletters*)
- **Buckingham Survey (1 page)** (*promotion of how to take part*)
- **Pontio (1/2 page)**
- **Covid-19 Update (1/2 page)**
- **Community Safety Partnership (1/2 page)**
- **How to vote (1/2 page)**
- Buxplore promotion (3/4 page)
- Equality and Diversity Group Update (1/2 page)
- Requests for favourite photos (1/2 page)

3. Any other suggestions?

(please note the **final deadline** for submission of articles to the CSG Clerk is **12 noon Monday 5th January 2021**, as they are included on the CSG agenda being sent out on 7th January. Please also keep in mind that the newsletter will be distributed at the end of February 2021.)

**BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY GROUP
THURSDAY 26th NOVEMBER 2020**

Contact Officer: Communications Clerk

Communications Strategy Group Annual Budget Review

1. Recommendation

- a) It is **RECOMMENDED** that the **4032/102 Publicity** budget is increased to £7598 to allow for a rise in printing costs and the graphic design of the newsletter, both due to retender in March 2021, and the annual payment for online social media management.
- b) It is **RECOMMENDED** that the **901/9030 Earmarked Reserves/Tourism Leaflets** budget for CSG remains the same to accommodate any additional printing of new leaflets over the next year.
- c) It is **RECOMMENDED** that the **4041/102 Website Operation & Provision** be raised to £5000 to accommodate any changes in website maintenance costs as the result of retendering in April 2021.

2. Background:

2.1. Previous budgets for the Communications Strategy Group over the last three years have included:

2.1.1 Buckingham Town Matters newsletter, at four editions a year; including production, design and delivery.

2.1.2 Buckingham Town Council website and its ongoing development and maintenance costs including website hosting, support and licence updates and domain hire.

2.1.3 Welcome to Buckingham packs, including the packs and leaflets used inside, i.e. Hidden Buckingham.

2.2 Members **AGREED** that the costs of an online social media manager should also be included. This would facilitate officer's management of the Town Council's sixteen social media accounts across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

However, the product officers intended to buy via Later.com was withdrawn, and a product with a similar functionality and cost point is not available. However, a social media manager product is still a necessary cost, a further £1188 per annum will be required for this.

Area 1: The Newsletter is funded from the CSG's main budget Publicity 4032/102, current budget £6,500

- 2.3. This includes funding the newsletter. A fixed contract for design and production until March 2021 was agreed at £3,992 per year. An additional cost of £50 was charged for the Summer edition due to changes of plans caused by Coronavirus.
- 2.4. Delivery costs are not fixed and vary. Estimated cost of delivery for 2020/2021 will be £1,724. CSG currently produce the audio newsletter for free using volunteers. The total cost of the newsletter production for 2020/2021 is forecast at £5,766.
- 2.5. The budget was increased to £6,500 in 2020/2021 in order to accommodate new houses at the St Rumbold's Field and other housing development sites in Buckingham. However, due to Coronavirus new residents have not moved into Buckingham as quickly as anticipated. The additional funding is likely to be needed in 2021/2022.
- 2.6. The design and print contract will be retendered in March 2021, the price for design has been fixed for the last six years, and the price for printing has been fixed for the last three years. An allowance for a 10% rise in costs for the newsletters production, design and delivery should be made in the 2021-2022 budget.
- 2.7. It is **RECOMMENDED** that the 4032/102 Publicity budget is increased to £7598 to allow for a rise in printing costs and the graphic design of the newsletter, both due to retender in March 2021, and the annual payment for online social media management.

Area 2: the website is funded from 4041/102 Website Operation & Provision, current budget £2,648

- 2.8. Predicted actual spend in this area for 2020/2021 is £2514 which covers website hosting, annual website support package, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) related website changes and domain hire. It also covers the first year's payment for a social media manager product. The current website support contract lasts until April 2021, and will need to be retendered at this time.
- 2.9. It is **RECOMMENDED** that the 4041/102 Website Operation & Provision be raised to £5000 to accommodate any changes in website maintenance costs as the result of retendering in April 2021.

Area 3: Welcome Packs are funded from 901/9030 Earmarked Reserves/Tourism Leaflets, current budget £2,404

- 2.10. It is likely that as the Tourist Information Centre enacts its tourism plan additional leaflets may be needed. Due to the pandemic many venues that would distribute Council leaflets have been closed for prolonged periods, or open but not using leaflets. Therefore, no additional tourism leaflets were required in 2020.
- 2.11. It is **RECOMMENDED** that the 901/9030 Earmarked Reserves/Tourism Leaflets budget for CSG remains the same to accommodate any additional printing of new leaflets over the next year.

3. Communications Strategy Group Budget

	2020/2021 Budget	2020/21 Forecast	Budget for 2021/22
4032/102 Publicity	£6,500	£5766	£7,598
4041/102 Website Operation & Provision	£2,648	£2514	£5,000
901/9030 Earmarked Reserves/Tourism Leaflets	£2,404	£0	£2,404
TOTAL	£11,552	£8280	£15,002

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BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY GROUP
THURSDAY 26th NOVEMBER 2020

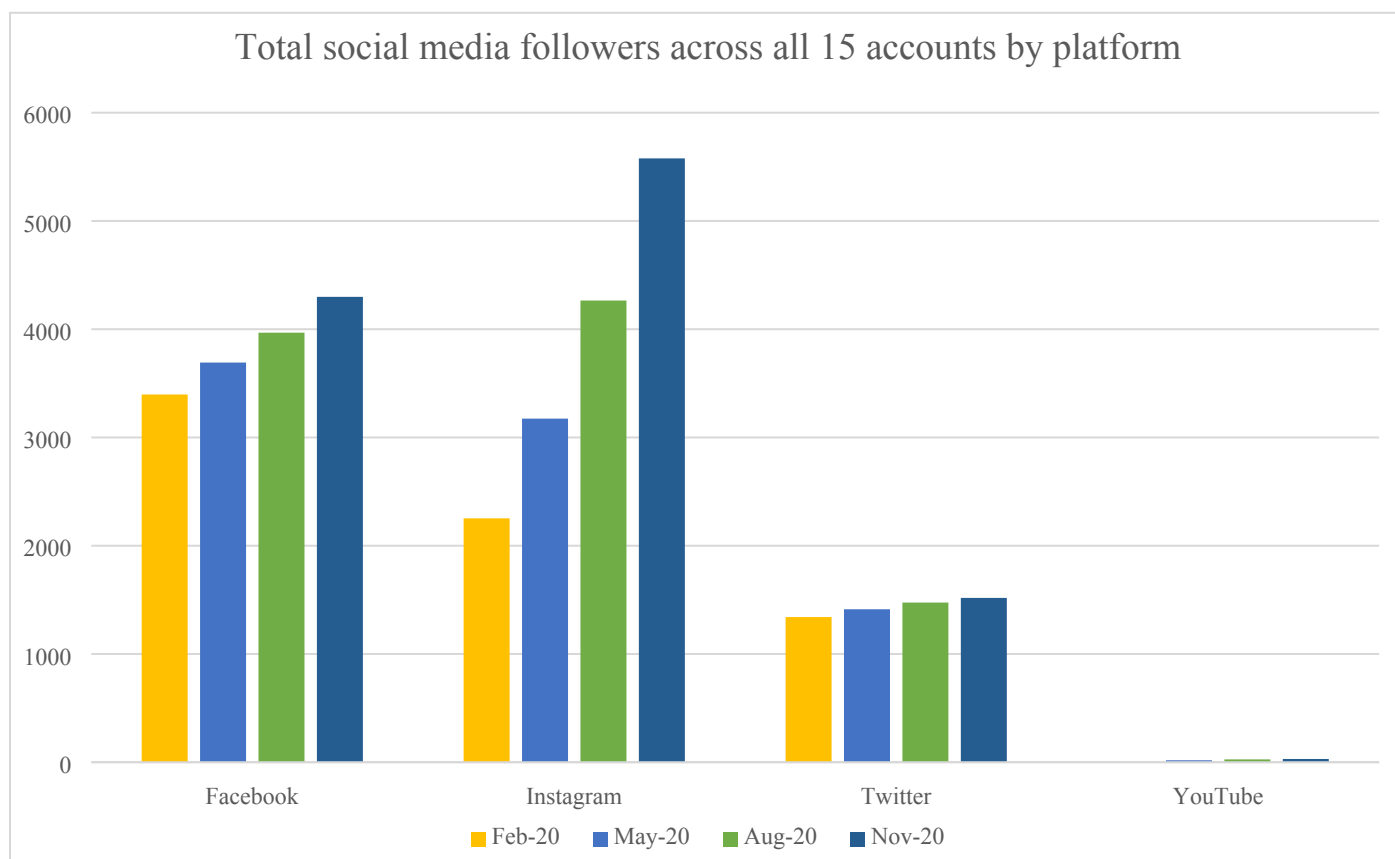
Contact Officer: Mrs Louise Stubbs, Communications Clerk

Annual Social Media Statistics Report

As of 1st November 2020, the Town Council runs 15 social media accounts across 4 different platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

1. Fastest growing accounts

In the period between November 2019 and November 2020 the fastest growth was on Instagram, which overtook Facebook in August 2020. Total social media followers across all 15 accounts rose from 5,457 to 11,450. A rise of 109%. Significantly higher than the previous year's 69% growth.



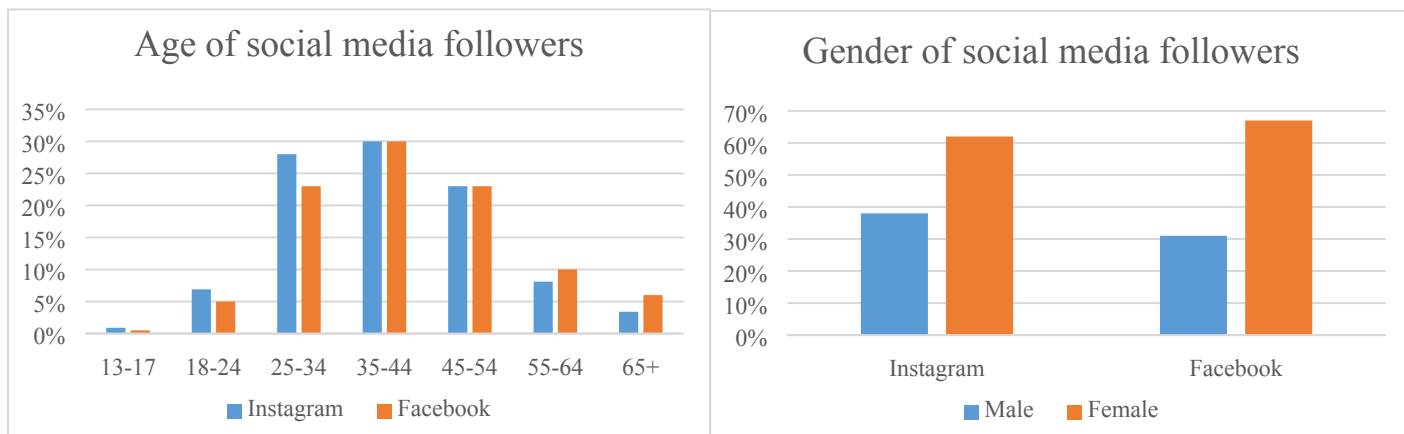
In terms of individual accounts, **Buckingham Markets** grew from 120 to 3,934 followers on Instagram in just one year. The account is managed by our Markets Manager who posts about the markets, as well as high quality images of Buckingham daily. The Market Manager uses the platform very successfully to interact with potential market traders.

On Twitter, **Discover Buckingham**, the Tourist Information Centre's managed account performed most strongly with a 27% rise in followers. While on Facebook the main **Buckingham Town Council** page recorded a much larger annual rise than previously, with 15% more followers over the year.

2. Why we use different social media platforms: age/gender of users

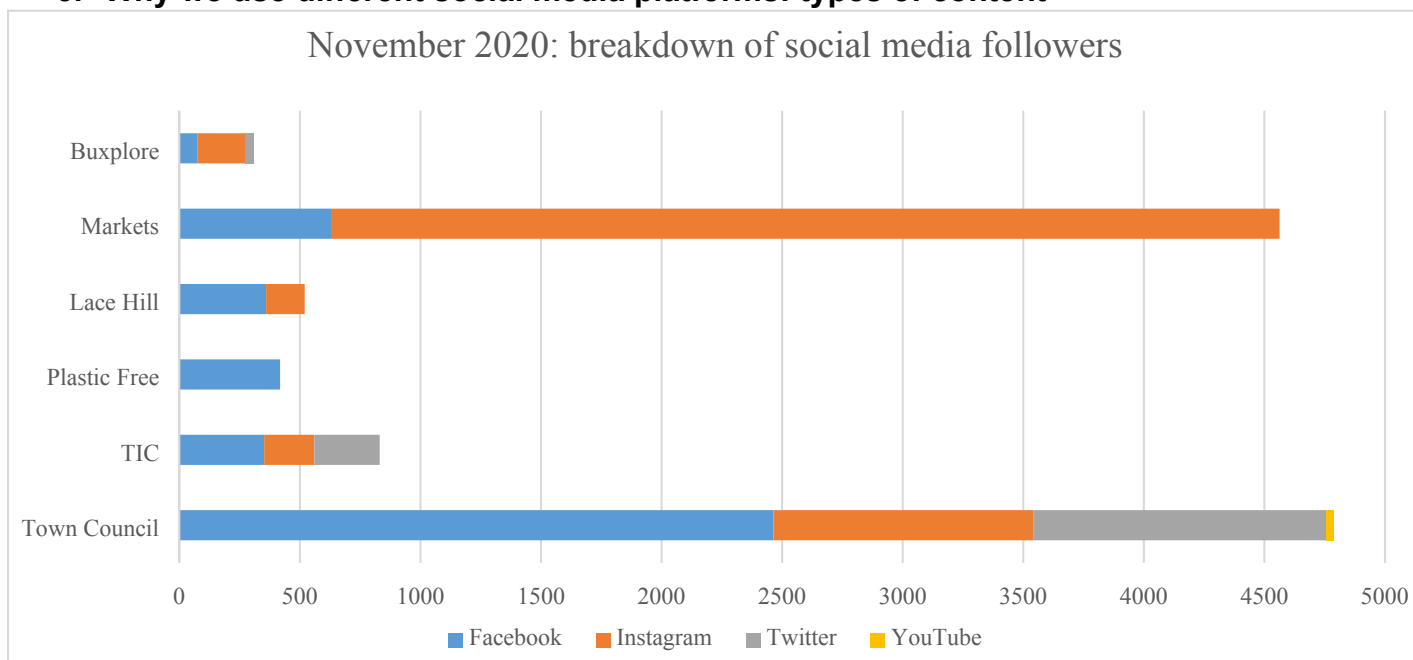
The Town Council must endeavour to communicate with residents of all ages, genders and abilities, in order to best reach the broadest cross-section of residents as possible. Instagram performs better with men and young people than Facebook, while Facebook has more older followers.

Overall, there are still low numbers of followers under 25, or over 55 engaging with the Council via social media. Other communication methods including the noticeboards and newsletter remain important.

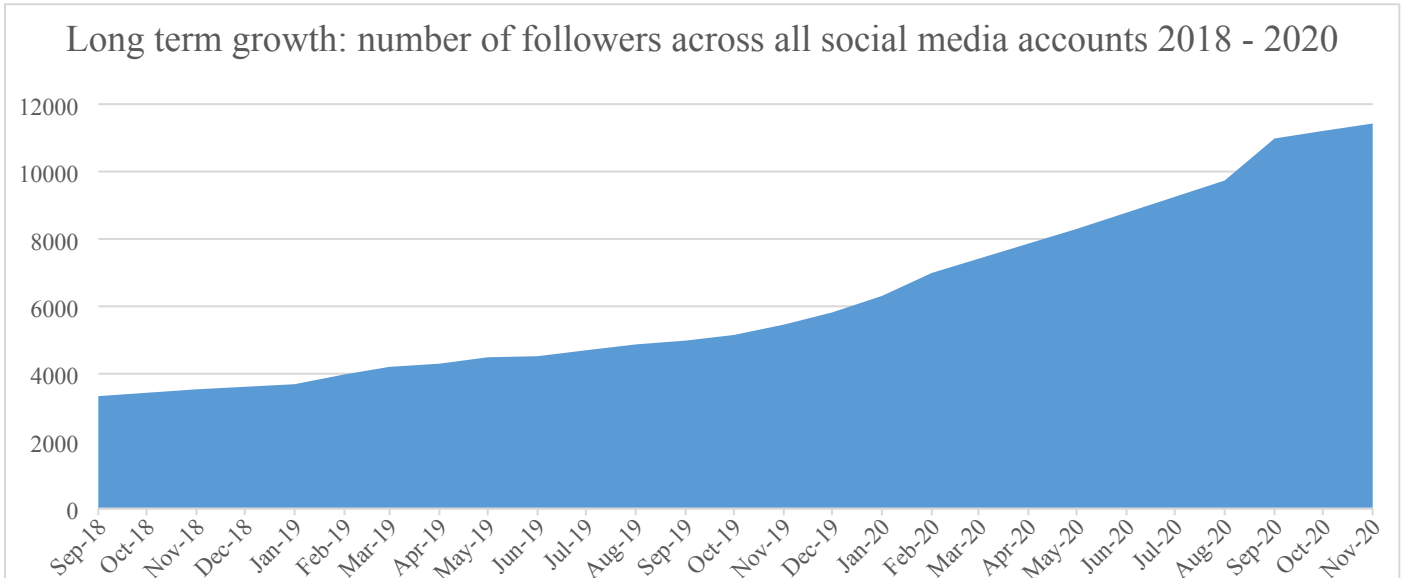


Note: Twitter removed the 'audience' analytic information from their website in January 2020, so no up to date data is available.

3. Why we use different social media platforms: types of content



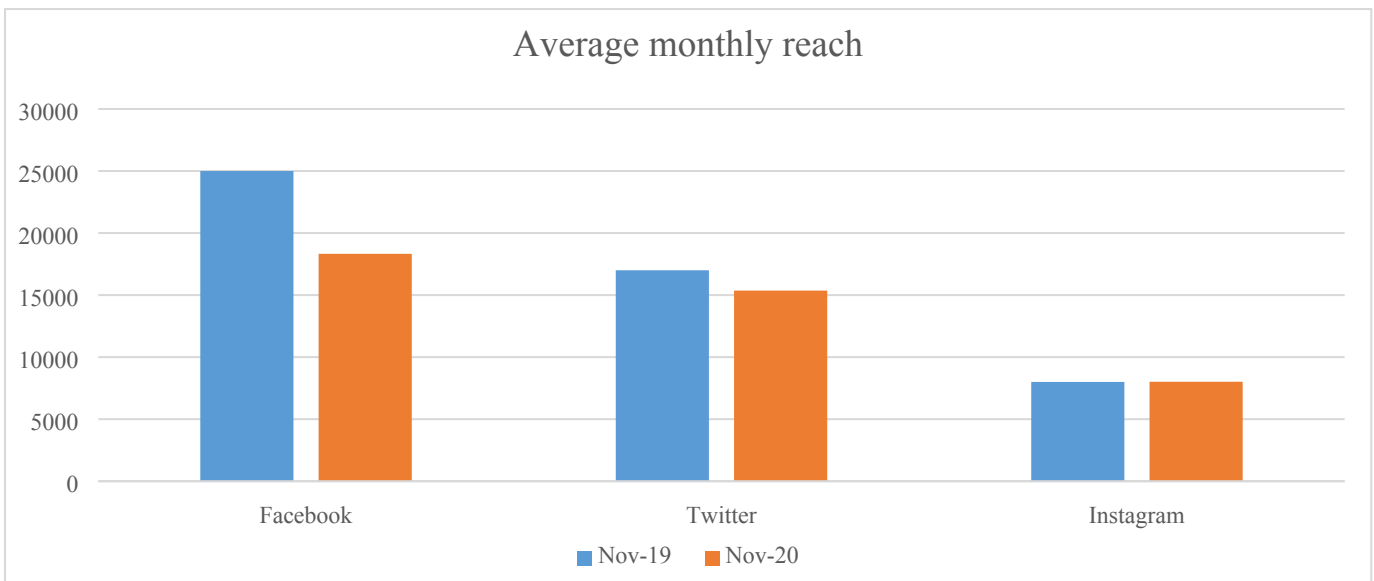
Different accounts perform more strongly on different social media, the snapshot breakdown above illustrates the strongest social media platform for each account. Very local, interactive content performs best on Facebook, while broader conversations work well on Twitter. Instagram works well for engagement with local businesses.



4. Most engaged with social media posts vs reach/impressions on main Council accounts:

Reach/impressions across all platforms has remained good given the loss of so many key community events, but overall average reach is lower than last year’s levels, except on Instagram which improved slightly.

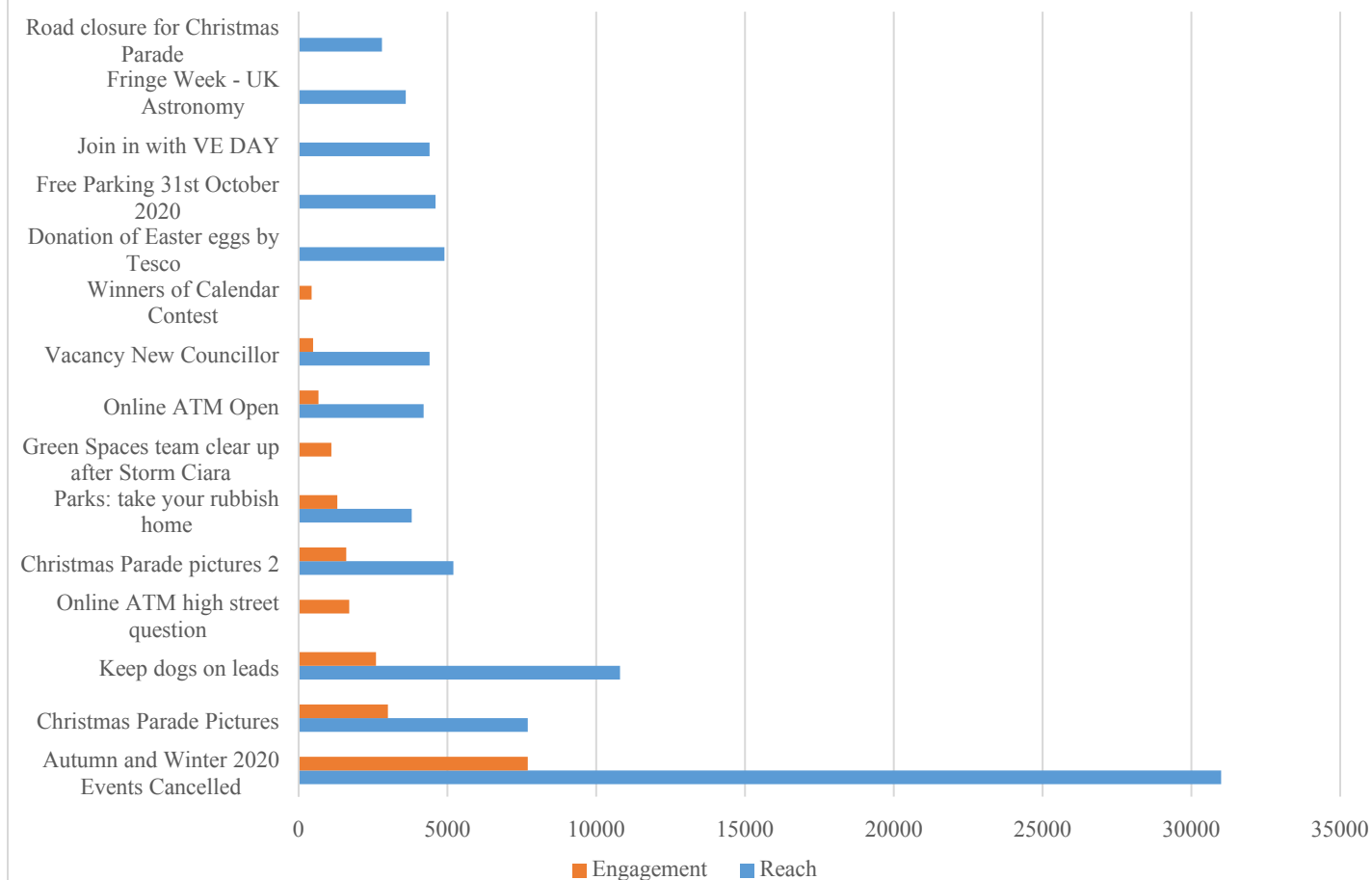
The growth we have made in follower numbers over the last year should put us in a good position to improve reach over 2021, particularly when events are allowed to be held again.



A ‘top ten’ assessment of the past twelve month shows that many of our most engaged with posts were at the beginning of the report period and involved the Christmas Parade.

However, other topics also recorded high engagement. The press release about the cancellation of Autumn and Winter events in 2020 had an unusually high reach at 31,000 accounts reached.

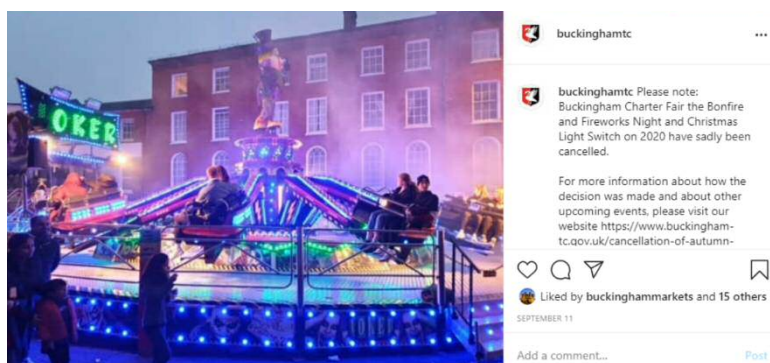
Nov 2019 - Nov 2020 Top ten highest reach and most engaged with social media posts



5. Quarterly update on best performing social media posts up to November 2020:

Please note: Only the top 3 results for engagement and/or impressions for the platform are included.

-	Facebook		Twitter		Instagram	
	Engagement	Reach	Engagement	Reach	Engagement	Impressions
The Diversity & Inclusion Working Group				1.4k		
Charter Fair	7.7k	31k	85	1.1k	22	365
Dog Show Winners	422					
Phone Box					27	398
Autumn Newsletter audio edition				1k		
Free Parking 31 st October		4.6k	46			
Winners of art contest	436	2.5k				
Family trying Buxplore			47			410
Removing trolleys from river					28	



6. Lessons from 2020:

The Councils communication of key messaging throughout the Coronavirus was extremely strong, however the pandemic has undoubtedly limited the growth we could have had over the period.

One area that was particularly hampered is the lack of traditional large set pieces in our annual social media content, including extremely popular local events like bonfire and fireworks. Officers have used this year as a period of experimentation, considering different ways that social media can be used to drive positive engagement with the public in a time where meeting face to face was not possible. Some of the resulting principles include:

- Daily posting where possible
- Improving the quality of images and social media graphics
- Creating online marketing plans for specific events or campaigns
- Much more frequent use of timed post options
- Creating online events
- Engaging with comments
- Framing things positively

The results have been extremely successful, and new ideas are continuing to be reviewed and monitored. Ideas for further development over the end of 2020 and into 2021 include:

- Increased use of video
- Daily posting plans
- Categorising and prioritising certain kinds of social media content
- Key measures for success

7. Social Media Management:

Much of the improvements in social media over the last year are best deployed using online social media management tools. Expectations amongst the public about how public bodies should operate on social media are extremely high.

Questions are submitted to the Council via social media, and responses are expected quickly, in the same way large businesses are able to. This immediacy of response is simply not possible with the Town Council's level of resources. However, answering questions before they are posed is extremely successful at cutting down on the number of such enquiries, and can be applied with thoughtful planning of the kind of content the Council produces.

Given the high number of followers we have on social media, the time required to produce enough suitable content also grows. Utilising social media management tools will be extremely important as Coronavirus restrictions eventually ease and life returns to normal.

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Press Releases from Buckingham Town Council

6th October to 17th November 2020

PRESS RELEASE 188 – River Rinse

7th October 2020 – Details of how the event was run and items found in the river.

PRESS RELEASE 189 – Grants change of use due to Coronavirus

14th October 2020 – Details of changes to Swan Community Hub and Lace Hill grant payments due to Coronavirus.

PRESS RELEASE 190 – 2021 to 2022 grants applications open

14th October 2020 – Opening of grants application period announcement.

PRESS RELEASE 191 – Town Council seeks to save Buckingham’s last public call box

15th October 2020 – Details of the Town Council’s reasons for wanting to keep the phone box.

PRESS RELEASE 194 – Pumpkin Trail

21st October 2020 – Information about the Pumpkin Trail in the Town Centre and how to take part.

PRESS RELEASE 193 – Buckingham’s Rubbish Campaign

21st October 2020 – Information about the competition being held with support from Buckinghamshire Recycles and how to enter.

PRESS RELEASE 192 – Buckingham Charter Fair cancelled for 1st time in town history

22nd October 2020 – Head Showman’s visit to Buckingham on what would have been the opening of the first fair.

PRESS RELEASE 195 – Buckingham Calendar 2020

27th October 2020 – Winners of the Art and Photography 2020 contest and how to buy calendars.

PRESS RELEASE 196 – Coronavirus impact on Buckingham Town Council services

5th November 2020 – Changes to Shopmobility, the Tourist Information Centre, Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre and the Green Spaces team due to the new government restrictions in November.

PRESS RELEASE 197 – Buckingham Switches on Lights

17th November 2020 – How to take part in the Big Buckingham Christmas Lights Switch On.

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