

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

Communications and Marketing Policy

1. Introduction

This Strategy is designed to guide the Town Council's Communications and Marketing activities over the coming months and years.

Communications activity is a key driver in public perception of overall Council performance. Keeping residents informed, listening to their concerns and involving them when making decisions has a significant impact on public satisfaction with the Council and its services.

Marketing techniques are an integral part the communications strategy and to be meaningful it must reflect the corporate aims and priorities of the Council. It will also reflect the principles set out in the Business Plan as well as reflecting current policies including the Equality Policy, Information and Data Protection Policy, Data Privacy Policy and Customer Care Policy.

2. Background

The Town Council's main areas of promotion as highlighted in the Business Plan are:

The Town:

- Promotion of the Town to encourage residents and visitors to enjoy and use the town centre, the town's attractions, open spaces and get involved and support town activities and events.
- Promotion to encourage people to want to live in Congleton
- Promotion to encourage current and new businesses to invest in Congleton.

The Council:

- Statutory and other information to help residents and businesses understand the Town Council's decision making.
- Marketing the Town Council's services to ensure accessibility for all and to maximise income.

Key priorities for the coming year will be:

- Increasing the number of events held in Congleton Town Centre
- Creating a town-wide events team to support events
- Develop a Tourism and Marketing Strategy
- Encouraging residents to vote in the May Council elections and in the Referendum for the Neighbourhood Plan
- Marketing the Town Hall to increase usage both in the week and at weekends
- Working with Graham Construction on communications about the Link Road works
- Working with the Leisure Centre to keep residents informed of the construction works
- Working with partners to boost Congleton's tourism offer
- Upgrade the Town Council's Website
- Increase the town's on-line presence
- Scope and Introduce a Welcome Pack for new residents

- Update and refresh the Town Council's data bases in line with GDPR
- Re-introduce flags on Mountbatten Way
- Produce Congleton 2019 material for wide-spread promotion
- Update distribution numbers and options for Bear Necessities
- Support the Congleton in Bloom and other national initiatives
- Develop a plan for more pro-active grant and sponsorship support

3. Communication and Marketing Strategic Objectives

Vision – “to enhance Civic Pride and the reputation of Congleton as a great place to live, work and visit by creating events and communicating openly and effectively with the Council's various audiences”

We aim to:

1. Improve two way communications with our residents, businesses and visitors; to have an understanding of what they want, consult with them and listen to their views
2. To increase involvement and interest in Council activities and to engage the public in the democratic process
3. To increase the number of events and activities in Congleton for residents and visitors.
4. Ensure the Council receives a higher level of positive recognition for its achievements and promote the reputation of the town and the council.
5. Ensure that Council's communications are accessible and timely, taking into account hard to reach groups and people with disability.
6. Establish www.congleton-tc.gov.uk as a go-to web site for Congleton
7. Maximise income for the Council's commercial services through effective marketing, offer and customer service.

These strategic objectives will inform the Council's approach to public relations, design, marketing, customer care, consultation, and website.

4. Stakeholders/key audiences

The stakeholders/key audiences for the Congleton Town Council are:

- Residents
- Town Councillors and Ward Councillors
- Partners within the public sector (Cheshire East Council, Health, Police etc)
- Special interest groups including those with language or disability needs
- Business community
- Voluntary/community organisations and groups
- Schools
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- Press/media -(mainly Chronicle, Cheshire Independent, Silk FM, Signal FM and Radio Stoke, Moorlands Radio, Congleton Effective Directory, So Cheshire, Cheshire Life - but could potentially attract regional TV and/or specialist media for some activities)
- Town Council employees
- Potential Service user groups

6. Principles

The following principles will be adopted in all communications:

- Integrity and honesty
- Clarity
- Openness and accessibility
- Inclusiveness
- Listening and responding
- Accountability
- Consistency
- Accuracy

8. Primary publications and communications media

The following are the primary publications and communications media used by Congleton Town Council

8.1 Publications

Bear Necessities; The Town Council and Community Groups newsletter, published four times a year and delivered to 11,500 households through door to door delivery. Print run 12,500, also available to pick up from the library and Tourist Information Centre and sent out to schools and MP. Talking Newspaper produced a listen to version of the newsletter.

Agendas, reports and minutes: Are sent to the press, the Burgesses and councillors. Public copies are available to view in the Tourist Information Centre, the Information Point of the Library and an Agenda Poster placed on the noticeboards. Agendas, reports and Minutes are also uploaded on to the web.

Publications/leaflets: Annual Report, Strategy Documents, Shopping Guide, Christmas flyer, Events leaflet, Town Hall leaflet, Where to Play, 40 things to do leaflet, Dementia Friendly activities leaflet (quarterly with the partnership)

Effective Directories – Congleton Town Council is given two free pages every month to publicise events and issues of importance in Congleton.

Noticeboards: The Town Council updates six community notice boards. These are updated every Monday by the Streetscape Staff

1. West Heath Shopping Centre
2. West Street Car park
3. Bus Station, Market Square
4. St John's Road, Buglawton
5. Parnell Square, Bromley Farm
6. Mossley Village Hall

In addition a public noticeboard alongside the Canal, off Canal Street is updated periodically.

8.2 Media Relations

Press releases and feature material: Produced through the Town Centre and Marketing Manager

Media statements: These are mostly reactive and cleared with the Chief Officer or Town Centre and Marketing Manager

Advertisements: produced for information, promotional and recruitment purposes and to meet statutory requirements (e.g. public notices).

Radio/TV Interviews – organised through the Town Centre and Marketing Manager

8.3 E: Communication

Town Council Website: www.congleton-tc.gov.uk is major vehicle for informing local people about local events.

E-mails: We have a growing database of groups and organisations and this can be an effective method of getting out messages quickly. Checked annually against GDPR

Twitter: The Council updates @Congletontown twitter account. This has more than 3000 followers.

Facebook: The Town Council's Facebook Page has 938 followers. Messages are often shared to Congleton Chat's Back which has around 14,000 followers.

Survey Monkey: Is used to gain feedback on local issues with local people. The largest reach was 1404 with the Neighbourhood Plan

8.4 Face to Face

Annual Town Meeting: Chance for residents to hear an update on events for the town and to give comments. Once a year before the end of May

Surveys and Market Research: Surveys and questionnaires have been carried out in the Town Centre and at satellite centres by staff, volunteers and student groups.

8.5 Through Close working with Congleton organisations

These include but are not limited to:

Bath House and Physic Garden group

Congleton Carnival Group

Congleton Churches

Congleton Community Projects

Congleton Dementia Friends Team

Congleton in Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhoods

Congleton Jazz and Blues

Congleton Lions

Congleton Partnership

Congleton Pride

Congleton Rotary

Congleton Sustainability Group

Congleton U3A
East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce
Electric Picture House
Friends of Congleton Park
Old Saw Mill
Pub Watch
The Congleton Community Education Partnership
The Youth Council
Traders

8.6 Events/Opportunities in 2019

April

Mayor's Ball
Easter Service in the Town Centre
Easter Treats
Easter Hop around the Shop competition
Triathlon
Makers Market

May

Town Council Elections
Mayor Making
Annual Town Meeting
Opening the Paddling Pool
Makers Market

June

Mayor's Civic Parade and Service
Food and Drink Festival
Brass on the Grass
Makers Market
Potential NP Referendum

July

Congleton Pride
Summer Brass Band Concerts in the park
Makers Market
In Bloom Judging

August

Summer Brass Band Concerts in the park
Jazz and Blues Festival
Makers Market
Town Centre Play Day

September

Duck Race in the Dane
Horticultural Show
National Heritage Open Days
Makers Market

October

Health and Well-Being Fayre
Congleton Half Marathon
Wedding Fayre
Makers Market

November

Rotary Bonfire
Christmas Lights Switch-on
Makers Market

December

Annual Town Carol Concert
Makers Market
Late night opening?
Christmas Window Dressing

January

Congleton Pantomime
Makers Market

February

Makers Market
Rotary Swimathon

March

Makers Market
Congleton Unplugged

Ongoing

- Giving Grants – ensuring the Town Council gets publicity from the organisations benefiting from our grants
- Congleton Partnership activities - including Dementia Friends
- Promotional support for Congleton in Bloom

8.7 Internal

Team Meetings - once a month – 2nd Wednesday of the month

8.8 Branding

The following should all clearly be identifiable as from Congleton Town Council and contain the Town Council Logo

- Business cards for Councillors and key staff
- Compliment slips
- Letter headed paper
- Public notice advertisements
- Purchase orders

The following should be clearly identifiable as Congleton Town Council:

- Litter-pickers and other equipment for hire
- Paddling Pool Staff
- Streetscape Staff
- Town Council Buildings or sites
- Town Council Vehicles
- Town Hall Caretaking Team

8.8 Accessibility

The Town Council contact details should always be kept up-to-date and available to make it as easy as possible for people to contact the Town Council via email, phone or the Website. The office is staffed Monday – Friday 9-5pm.

9. Commercial Activities

The Town Hall is a flag-ship service for the Town Council. It is a major asset that still has a lot of potential for more weekend and week day bookings.

Research is on-going into other local venues to make sure that the Town Hall offer is as good as it can be in terms of service, facilities, pricing, ease of booking and use. Future customers for the building are sought and well as maintaining good relations with current users.