

**CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES**

<b>COMMITTEE:</b>	<b>Community Committee</b>										
<b>MEETING DATE AND TIME</b>	<b>29 June 20223 7.00 pm</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>Town Hall, Bridestones</b>								
<b>REPORT FROM</b>	<b>Jackie MacArthur, Communities and Marketing Manager &amp; DCO</b>										
<b>AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>15. Bear Necessities – Newsletter of the Town Council and Community Groups</b>										
<b>Background</b>	<p>Congleton Town Council has been producing a quarterly newsletter called Bear Necessities since 2007. In the past year paper costs have increased significantly, making officers question if there is a better way to produce the newsletter/ communicate our messages.</p> <p>Editions usually come out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>January</b> – covering January, February and March</li> <li>• <b>April</b> – covering April. May and June</li> <li>• <b>July</b> – covering July, August and September</li> <li>• <b>October</b> – covering October, November and December</li> </ul> <p>(note this financial year due to the Elections and pre-election period, the editions are June, late September, early Jan and late March (Easter end of March))</p> <p>This paper has been written to seek guidance from Councillors on whether they wish officers to some time and effort into exploring one or more alternative options for the future of Bear Necessities, or if the Council wishes to continue with the same format. Regardless of changing the format, a new round of quotes to ensure best value for print and distribution will be necessary in line with our financial regulations.</p> <p>Currently – the Town Council produces 4 copies of the newsletter per year. This used to be one of the criteria for applying for ‘Quality Council’ status. Checking the NALC guide to Local Council accreditation it is no longer a specification and the guidance is more about showing how the council actively communicates with its residents.</p>										
<b>Options</b>	<p>Officers believe there are five potential options which councillors may wish to consider. A simplistic guide is below</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 5%;"></th> <th style="width: 45%;">Summary of Action</th> <th style="width: 25%;">Pros</th> <th style="width: 25%;">Cons</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td>Stop producing a newsletter.</td> <td>Save money and staff time</td> <td>Lose a key and established means of communicating CTC activities to residents. Not everyone online.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Summary of Action	Pros	Cons	1	Stop producing a newsletter.	Save money and staff time	Lose a key and established means of communicating CTC activities to residents. Not everyone online.
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1	Stop producing a newsletter.	Save money and staff time	Lose a key and established means of communicating CTC activities to residents. Not everyone online.								

	2	Carry on doing the same but go out for quotes to ensure best value, including online and paper delivery.	Residents will continue to receive the quarterly newsletter.	Paper prices rising means that budgets will need almost certainly need to increase to maintain status quo.
	3	Take out 8 or 12 pages as a standalone pull-out section within Beartown Voice with branding on the front cover to say incorporated.	Cost saving – could do every other month. Plus run-ons for other centres. The two publications are usually delivered at the same time.	May risk losing some of our identity. Need to understand public reaction to Beartown Voice and to Bear Necessities.
	4	Produce 3 editions per year rather than 4	Looks the same, should be able to produce within budget	Already struggling to include all the information requested within the space.
	5	Produce online version only	Save costs. More environmentally friendly.	Will people read an online-only version? Already online and page does not get many views.
<b>Recommendations</b>	For the next 12 months officers think the Town Council should explore options 2 and 3 in more detail and report back to the August committee.			
<b>Financial Implications</b>	Looking to ensure best value and that a newsletter can continue within the budget allocated for the task. Note in June the paper quality was reduced from 170grms to 115 grms to save money.			
<b>Environmental Implications</b>	Carbon footprint considerations for both digital and print copy. Bear Necessities is printed on carbon-neutral accredited paper.			
<b>Equality and Diversity Impact</b>	The Town Council pays to deliver Bear Necessities to all households in CW12 (except where there is a no cold calls or unsolicited mail notice.) There is an opportunity to increase inclusion by offering the newsletter in multiple channels – print, web and email, for example.			
<b>PROPOSALS</b>	To be agreed at the committee.			