

COMMUNICATIONS GROUP - NOTES OF THE MEETING ON 4TH FEBRUARY 2014

Present: Andy Parker, Janet Miller, John Phillips, Tezz Honeyford, Tina Heathcote

Apologies: Emily Markie, Rachel Clarke

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The history of the previous Communications Group was noted. It met regularly between August and February 2013, and achieved a considerable amount - designing and introducing the Town Team logo and identity, setting up the website and emailing systems, drafting and agreeing the Terms of Reference for the group and liaising with Vision Buxton re the Visit Buxton website listings. Key members then found they were no longer able to commit the same amount of time that they had been doing. Since then, while much of the remit of the Communications Group has continued, this has been by individuals on an ad hoc basis, and other areas of work have not been picked up. A more focussed approach is now needed.

2. COMMUNICATIONS GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

Copies of this were handed out, it is also available in the members' area of the website. It was noted that the group's remit has two major strands - communications with members and communications with the outside world.

3. IMPROVING INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

We now have 108 Town Team members, many of whom are not fully involved, and hear from us very infrequently. It was agreed that a regular newsletter to all members would address this, and should encourage inactive members to get involved. John suggested it could be written as an email which included the first part of each item with a 'Read More' link to the full article on the website. He volunteered to produce a first draft, which would include a general welcome and update; how we function ie via project teams; upcoming projects and help needed; also a call for anyone who is an expert on geo-caching - see item 11.1 below. Janet will send John the Town Team logo and the 'shadow people' for inclusion.

4. BTT WEBSITE IMPROVEMENTS

A basic layout was agreed, with a much narrower banner, and with the first page having two columns, one for the 'about us', the other for News, that could be updated regularly. It was noted that any layout these days needs to work with smartphones as well as full size screens - themes are available that will adjust the layout automatically. Andy and Tezz will look through the available themes and choose which would work best for us. It was agreed that we should avoid altering internal coding as this could cause problems sometime in the future.

Janet will send the 'shadow people' graphics so they can develop a range of different banners.

It was agreed that we should keep the Forum, because while members do not use it for general discussions, it is very useful when we want to consult on something eg the Business Plan.

Additional pages are needed for new projects - Buxton Spring Clean and Talking Signposts; Andy will set Janet up as an Administrator so she can sort out extra project pages as needed.

5. EMAIL SYSTEMS

We currently have five emails set up:

townteam@ - this is the main one that Janet uses for general communications

directors@ - again one Janet uses, but less frequently

communications@ - was allocated to Emma Fairbrother, it was agreed Andy will take this over

ideas@ - was allocated to Mike Bryant, it was agreed Janet will start checking this for now

pilotgroup@ - out of use and heavily spammed, it was agreed that Andy should set up an automated response directing real people to an alternative email address.

The problem of spam was discussed, and whether we should only allow email links via a contact page, with Capcha protection. On balance it was decided that this was too much of a deterrent to people contacting us.

6. PRESS RELEASES AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Janet will check the contact details for Justine and BBC Northwest (who covered the Academy of Urbanism visit) and add her to the press contacts list.

John and Tezz volunteered to take on the drafting and co-ordinating of press releases.

It was also suggested that they should send a regular news update to the Advertiser, with information about eg the Ideas meetings for inclusion in the Community pages, as well as the more substantial press releases about specific projects and events.

7. FACEBOOK

The Facebook page was set up by students last year for the Spring Fair. It is reasonably well used, both Janet and Rachel post information and events there, occasionally it generates a flurry of activity in response. It was agreed that this arrangement could continue for now, central co-ordination is less important when other people's previous posts are there to see.

It was also agreed that a Facebook Group (as opposed to a page) was not necessary.

8. TWITTER

We do have a Twitter account that was set up for the last Spring Fair, unfortunately we don't know the passwords, so it may make more sense to start all over again. Janet will discuss this with Emily.

9. INVOLVEMENT IN PROJECTS

Tezz will join the Spring Fair project team and help with communications.

The Buxton Spring Clean and the Talking Signpost projects will also need Communications Group input at some stage.

It was suggested that if the Artisan Market trials go ahead, the Communications Team could be involved in both the prior consultation and the evaluation.

10. MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT DRIVE

It was agreed that we should delay this until we have improved our systems for communicating with the membership, so as to avoid large numbers of people joining and then wondering if they are needed.

11. OTHER BUSINESS AND IDEAS

11.1 Geo-Cache Trails: A series of geo-cache trails around the town, with different themes, has been suggested, which is something the Communications Group might wish to be involved with. On a similar theme, the Museum are wanting to trial some smart phone trails in March, and have asked the Town Team to be involved. Janet will circulate the information.

11.2 Merchandise: It was suggested that at some stage we might want to have Buxton Town Team merchandise available, for instance shopping bag, hats etc. It was also suggested that if the Pavilion Gardens failed to progress the idea of Buxton branded merchandise, the Town Team could take it on instead.

12. NEXT MEETING

This will be held on Tuesday 4th March at 3:30pm, John will book a room in the Dome and advise.

JCMM

05Mar14