

20th September 2022



To Members of Council

You are hereby summoned to a MEETING OF COUNCIL to be held on **Monday, 26th September 2022 at 7.30pm** at Congregational Church Hall, Bedford Stroud, Stroud, GL5 1AY to conduct the following business.

Helen Bojaniwska
Town Clerk

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies
2. To receive declarations of interest or requests for dispensations
3. To appoint members to fill Committee vacancies:
 - Finance and Policy (1)
 - Environment (1)
 - Consultations and Highways (2)
 - Personnel (1)
4. To approve the minutes of the Council meetings of 9th May 2022 and 25th July 2022 previously circulated
5. To receive the Mayor's remarks
6. To receive questions from members of the public
7. To receive brief verbal reports from District and County Councillors
8. To receive the Clerk's Report (for information only)
9. To approve payments from July 2022
10. To approve an amendment to Financial Regulation 6.6
11. To review the Council's bank signatories
12. To receive a report regarding a Warm Spaces initiative in the town
13. To approve a Communications and Engagement Strategy and delegate to the Personnel Working Group appointment of a new Communications and Engagement role
14. To consider a request from Stroud United Charities to nominate at least one new trustee
15. To receive Working Group reports, previously circulated, as follows:

Community	27 th June 2022
Consultations & Highways:	11 th July 2022 and 15 th August 2022
Environment:	12 th July 2022
Regeneration:	21 st July 2022
Personnel:	8 th August 2022
16. To resolve in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting
17. To receive a verbal report on office accommodation
18. To consider a report regarding access to council land

Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (age, race, gender, sexual orientation, faith, marital status and disability); Crime and Disorder (Section 17); Health and Safety; and Human Rights.

Clerk's report for Council 12/9/2022

Levelling Up Fund

The Levelling Up Fund bid was submitted in July. It is not clear when the successful bids will be announced, other than some time this autumn. It is permitted to spend some of the match funding in advance of the decision, so I am looking at opportunities to progress some projects, which we would be completing with or without the grant, e.g. lighting in Bank Gardens and some internal projects at the Sub Rooms.

Staff Matters

Line managers will be completing staff reviews for all staff this month. Any training needs or contractual matters will be reported to the Personnel Committee in October, so that any budgetary implications can be considered.

The 2022 pay award has not yet been finalised. The current employers' "final" one-year (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023), offer to the unions is:

- with effect from 1 April 2022: an increase of £1,925 on all NJC pay points 1 and above and an increase of 4.04 per cent on all allowances (as listed in the 2021 NJC pay agreement circular dated 28 February 2022)
- with effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of one day to all employees' annual leave entitlement and the deletion of pay point 1 from the NJC pay spine.

The pay increase is slightly higher than budgeted for this year. More information is available on the [LGA website](#).

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)

Our application to Stroud District Council for funding from the SPF for additional Community Development staffing was rejected.

Complaint

As discussed at the meeting on 25th July 2022 a complaint was submitted to the solicitor as instructed in mid-August and their response is due to be delivered within 8 weeks. Thank you to Cllr Andrews for drafting the letter.

Helen Bojaniwska FSLCC, Town Clerk
5th September 2022

All Payments July 2022

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid	Transaction Detail
01/07/2022	Water Plus - Thanet House	1632	£12.00	Purchase Ledger DDR Payment
01/07/2022	Water Plus - Libbys Drive 7000	867	£13.40	Purchase Ledger DDR Payment
04/07/2022	Survey Monkey Europe	5431	£408.00	Subscription renewal
04/07/2022	Wilko	1465	£4.00	Bowl
06/07/2022	Alan Price	1160	£670.00	Grave digging fees
06/07/2022	BPE Solicitors LLP	2848	£3,600.00	Negligence claim
06/07/2022	C S Gardner	222	£200.00	Fit blinds, bolt and plug
06/07/2022	J S Whittaker T/A Colors	591	£2,000.00	Summer planting & maintenance
06/07/2022	CONSORTIUM	7891	£20.39	Wallet env dl wht 90gsm
06/07/2022	CONSORTIUM	1365	£86.36	Centrefeed 2-ply towels
06/07/2022	Exedra Nursery	2207	£666.00	Plants
06/07/2022	iHASCO	5718	£960.00	Annual renewal fee
06/07/2022	Lansdown Road Motors Ltd	5348	£46.00	Mot Mitsubishi + parts
06/07/2022	Pack Masonry Ltd	1617	£21,738.00	4797
06/07/2022	Pipercom Ltd	1135	£941.42	Broadband link upgrade
06/07/2022	Somerset County Council	1972	£75.60	Nox tubes analysis
06/07/2022	Stroud Parish Churches	1415	£75.00	St Laurence Church Hall hire
06/07/2022	Stroud Subscription Rooms Trus	567	£358.00	Hire of ballroom
06/07/2022	Thrupp Tyre Company Ltd.	4244	£30.00	Fir own 18x8.50-10 tyres x2
06/07/2022	Hughes&Salvidge Holdings Ltd T	8892	£280.80	Exchange 6 yard skip
06/07/2022	Hughes&Salvidge Holdings Ltd T	8893	£264.00	Wait and load of muck away
06/07/2022	Amanda Whittington	77	£300.00	Nature detective audio trail
06/07/2022	Zurich Municipal	6320	£6,923.76	Insurance and inspections
06/07/2022	Friends of Daisy Bank	BACS	£500.00	Friends of DB covid fund grant
06/07/2022	Stroud Book Festival	BACS	£1,500.00	Book Festival arts grant
06/07/2022	Independence Trust	BACS	£1,980.00	Independence Trust grant
07/07/2022	Allstar Business Solutions Ltd	7320	£221.41	Fuel
08/07/2022	Timpson	206	£36.00	Keys
11/07/2022	Polybags Ltd	66	£104.30	Black compactor
15/07/2022	SDC	DD	£1,068.00	SDC
15/07/2022	PAYROLL	DD	£19,072.39	PAYROLL JULY 2022
18/07/2022	Ecotricity - Gas Thanet 101976	7660	£26.20	Gas Thanet House
18/07/2022	Ecotricity - Thanet 10152716	2716	£19.85	Purchase Ledger DDR Payment
18/07/2022	Ecotricity - Libbys Drive 1014	9391	£179.49	Electricity Libbys
18/07/2022	Ecotricity - Thanet 10153686	97.93	£97.93	Electricity Thanet
19/07/2022	BAILEY PARTNERSHIP	7912	£2,508.00	Project Management
19/07/2022	The Bush Consultancy Ltd	8367	£5,352.00	Subminssion of FP & LBC
19/07/2022	Childs and Sulzmann Ltd.	3373	£1,969.50	Architects and design fee
19/07/2022	Childs and Sulzmann Ltd.	3374	£1,140.00	Architects fees
19/07/2022	Chubb Fire & Security Ltd.	5714	£186.40	Service
19/07/2022	CONSORTIUM	2173	£6.00	Microfibre cloths
19/07/2022	Countrywide Grounds Maintenanc	1728	£2,316.00	Grounds maintenance cemetery
19/07/2022	Down to Earth Stroud	622	£192.00	Gardening assistance June
19/07/2022	JAMES & OWEN LTD	8526	£89.57	Stationery
19/07/2022	MDA Consulting Ltd	1368	£780.00	Professional fees
19/07/2022	Pipercom Ltd	1172	£711.77	IT services
19/07/2022	Play Gloucestershire	236	£3,714.16	After school play sessions
19/07/2022	Sasha Lewis	154	£250.00	Cemetery audio tour recording
19/07/2022	SLCC Enterprises Ltd	6511	£54.00	Finance summit HB
19/07/2022	Smiths (Gloucester) Ltd	662	£176.40	Recycling and waste
19/07/2022	Thirsty Work Ltd.	7593	£50.70	Water

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid	Transaction Detail
19/07/2022	University of Bristol	4219	£30.00	Exam fee SM
19/07/2022	HMRC	BACS	£5,812.80	PAYE/NIC July
19/07/2022	LGPS	BACS	£5,970.76	Pensions July
19/07/2022	Top of Town Toddlers	BACS	£150.00	TOTTs ward budget grant
19/07/2022	Renault Finance	5152	£30.00	Renault battery hire
20/07/2022	Tontopf e.K.	XDU9	£84.85	Badges
20/07/2022	Workwear Express Ltd	1348	£502.56	Overpayment on INV1361348
22/07/2022	SDC	DD	£624.00	SDC RATES THANET HSE
25/07/2022	Lister Unified Communications	5411	£102.32	Mobile phone charges
26/07/2022	EE Ltd	3618	£39.12	Mobile phone charges
26/07/2022	TeamGantt	P650	£25.73	Monthly Subscription
27/07/2022	SGW Payroll Ltd.	4748	£63.30	Payroll month 4
27/07/2022	Konica Minolta Business Soluti	160	£214.06	Photocopier charges
28/07/2022	Ebay	2945	£56.49	Key for Marjoram presentation
28/07/2022	Midcounties Co-operative	4403	£3.90	Coffee
29/07/2022	Amazon EU	2907	£139.97	Galaxy Tab A7 Lite 32GB Grey W
29/07/2022	GLASDON UK LTD	4501	£43.79	Glasdon Litter Bin Key

Proposal to amend Financial Regulations

In order to spread the workload for councillors authorizing payments, it is recommended that regulation 6.6 is amended as follows:

Currently:

6.6 Cheque signatories will be the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairs of Committees together with other council members as required.

Proposed:

6.6 Cheque/online banking signatories will be appointed by Full Council as required.

Review of Bank Signatories

Existing current account signatories are: Cllrs: Andrews, Cranston, Hale, Oldman and Schoemaker. It would be helpful to have a few more signatories prepared to join a rota for authorising online payments.

Warm Spaces Project

AUTHOR

Deputy Town Clerk

CONSULTEES

Community Development Officer
District Hub Coordinator – Creative Sustainability
Stroud Parish Community Hubs

FOR MEETING

Full Council, 12th September 2022

RECOMMENDATION

To approve officer time to develop the initiative with partner organisations.

To approve use of the Community Resilience (Covid-19) Fund to fund an extension of 7 hours per week of the Community Development Officer role for a limited period of one month, to begin from 15th September 2022 – 15th October 2022 to cover the additional work.¹

To delegate additional approval for any required increase in CDO hours to Personnel Committee, at their meeting on 31st October 2022 to be met from the Community Resilience (Covid-19) Fund.

To approve use of ward specific projects budget to facilitate meeting room hire plus ancillary start-up costs for items such as tea/coffee, hot water urns and crockery if required

REPORT

The Community Development Officer (CDO) has been discussing ways to support the community over the coming winter months and has been researching the idea of providing 'Warm Banks' for people in the parish.

The signposting to and resourcing of publicly accessible warm spaces is an area the Town Council can assist with.

Contact has been made via Stroud Chamber of Trade to a few town businesses, St Laurence's Church and the Network of Stroud Hubs about providing spaces.

The creation of a map of these spaces as well as a timetable, to publicise where and when people can expect to find a welcoming warm space is key to this work.

¹ Based on National Employer Offer from August 22 but still to be confirmed.

One of the key elements for this work will be establishing which statutory organisations or other grant funders might be in a position to provide funding. Additional funding will ensure community groups have the money to maintain their offering through the winter. A number of the community hubs have cited significant concerns about this due to their older, less efficient buildings with little scope to make immediate energy saving improvements.

In response to an email sent to the Clerk from the Vice-Chair of the District Council Community Services Committee, Councillor Rebecca Aldam, the CDO highlighted the scope of current plans for the town. The CDO has asked Cllr Aldam if she is aware of any funds or support available to communities and asked if she could feedback the real need for additional support to District Council officers.

Regarding further support for individuals struggling with the cost of living over the winter, the community hubs are an important element, offering as they do food on a donations basis, community cafés, leisure activities, as well as signposting on to other support and “drop in” sessions by the food bank, CAB etc. They are also now a distribution point for the SDC hardship vouchers which have come through the District Council Health and Wellbeing Team.

The CDO has provided a map of the Stroud hubs with their opening times, as well as a district wide one that was pulled together by Miranda Eeles at Creative Sustainability and aimed at the local refugee community (Please see **Appendix A**).

Stroud Town Councillor Adrian Oldman is also working on plans for fundraising to distribute slow cooker packs with starter spices and recipes to families who need them – again in partnership with the community hubs, and possibly the Food Bank.

At the end of September Transition Stroud will be running a shop space in town for Big Green Week with a focus on energy saving measures and activities (like making door sausages) to address the intersecting needs between the cost-of-living crisis and the climate crisis – this is still in development but could provide a good opportunity to signpost people on to any help coming through the district or the availability of any “warm banks” if known by then.

On 1st September, an initial meeting was convened to instigate the discussion around the warm spaces available in the town. Organisations and community groups were asked;

- Would you like to be involved in the community response this winter and if so what do you think you could offer? E.g. coordination of the response, a warm space that could be open to the public, volunteers, activities, material resources.

- What do you need that you don't currently have to make this offer? E.g volunteers to welcome people into a space, money to heat, signposting to resources
- Do you have any ideas (or concerns) that you would like to raise?

The notes from this meeting are attached as **Appendix B**. A further meeting has been arranged at the Old Town Hall for Friday 16th September at 11am with additional statutory agencies invited as well as charities and organisations in the town. All town councillors are welcome to attend.

A timetable of available public spaces along with a map will be made available in hard copy and on the Town Council website and distributed to partners and organisations in the town.

It should be noted that the current prediction for the winter of 22-23 is that 40% of the population will fall into fuel poverty, with many requiring support for the first time. It is important that readily available advice, support and signposting is provided to those who may not know what help is available to them. There is also a concern that the stigma of requiring such help may prevent people entitled to support not to seek it. This will be a key element to the way the scheme is communicated to the wider community.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council may exercise the General Power of Competence in regard to expenditure and actions relating to this report.

FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications

An application has been submitted to Gloucestershire County Council for a Thriving Communities Grant to increase the CDO hours for six months to undertake research on outcomes modelling. It is anticipated that we will be given an answer by early October. If successful this work would begin in November. If this application is not successful, an increase in hours for the CDO role could be delegated to the Personnel Committee, with a recommendation that the additional hours are paid for using the Covid-19 Community Resilience Fund. The estimated annual cost of funding this equates to £9,678 inclusive of the current pay offer, PAYE and pensions.

The Community Resilience (Covid-19) Fund is currently £12,670.

Additional funding and resources

The possibility of a district-wide funding application to Gloucestershire Funders to request financial support for a coordinator role for part of the work required has been raised by partners. The CDO is liaising with Creative Sustainability, GL11 and SDC to assist with this. However, it should be noted that it may take

up to three months to coordinate an application, recruit the role and train the candidate, by which time much of the initial work will need to be finished.

Staffing implications

Currently this work is taking precedence over other projects due to the impact and scale of the predicted crisis.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

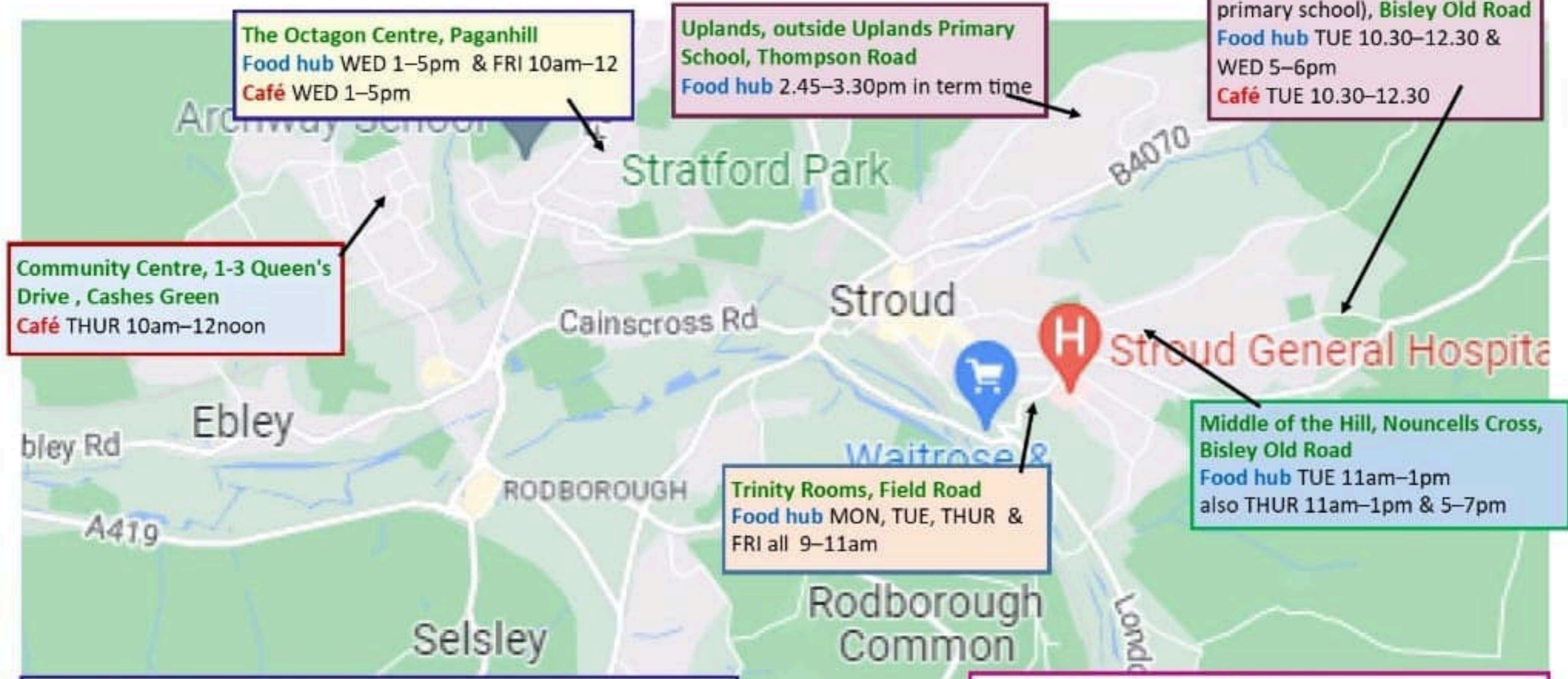
The Council is legally bound by the public sector equality duty to prevent and eliminate discrimination, establish and promote equality and equal opportunities, and foster good relations between people with different protected characteristics

CO2 IMPLICATIONS

KM

06/09/2022

Is money tight? At these Stroud town food hubs and cafes you pay what you can – or not at all



The Marah Trust – free nutritious hot meals, a friendly welcome, and advice and support. Open to all adults.

Café The Scout Hut, Chapel Street, Stroud
MON, WED & FRI 12.30–2.30pm also

Café ST Albans Church, Parliament Street, Stroud SAT 12.30–2.30pm

marah

Information provided by the Stroud Food Hubs
April 2022

Stroud District Foodbank delivery service — for a food bank referral please contact **Citizens Advice** on **0808 800 0510** or **0808 800 0511** (open MON–FRI 9am–4pm) and talk confidentially with a trained adviser

Stroud District foodbank

Appendix B

Notes of Stroud Warm Spaces meeting – 1st September 2022

In attendance: Cllr Steve Ponting (Rodborough Parish Council), Laura Beattie (Stroud Town Council – Community Development Officer), Kate Montgomery (Stroud Town Council – Deputy Clerk), Miranda Eeles (Creative Sustainability and District Hubs Development Lead), Kate Stacey (Churches Together), Steve Saville (Churches Together), Jaqui Smith (Paganhill Community Group), Cllr Adrian Oldman (Stroud Town Council), Cllr Stella Parkes (Mayor Stroud Town Council), Cllr Alick Miskin (Rodborough Parish Council)

Introduction/Purpose of the meeting:

We are all aware that the cost-of-living crisis is going to have a huge impact in our community, with many people being pushed into poverty for the first time. Those unused to being supported may struggle to both find the support they need and to bring themselves to access it. There is a huge amount already happening in Stroud particularly around the community hubs and they have a store of expertise in supporting and signposting community members who require support. They do this in a relational and community led way that is very successful and is something we can look towards as an example as we seek to engage different audiences. The purpose of this meeting is to have an initial discussion about what various groups and churches already offer, what they might be able to offer over the winter and what they need in order to be able to maintain that throughout the winter (**please see the attached timetable which details what is currently offered – these are a combination of warm spaces and food offerings which will be delineated on public facing materials once confirmed**).

Q. How would you like to be involved in a community response?

Steve P – Rodborough are looking at setting up their own warm spaces, and are looking at funding as they need to be careful with resources. Cllr Robin Layfield would like it to be noted that there should be digital access in these spaces.

Miranda – went to a similar meeting organised by GL11 Community Hub yesterday where there was representation from a wide range of organisations, including a number of different churches, the NHS, community centres and local venues. A summary of the main discussion points are attached in a separate doc. From a Stroud District wide perspective perhaps we can put together a costed plan to take to Gloucestershire Funders and other donors to resource this. This will help ensure coverage and coordination and reduce the risk of duplication. GL11 discussion about sharing and training new volunteers, particularly in areas that have infrastructure but not the people to support it.

Would like to flag that Creative Sustainability would be able to offer a warm space with community meals, aimed at young people who are often forgotten in these types of responses.

Kate Stacey – The churches have lots of spaces (some of them are better insulated than others) they would like to consider how they can use them further. They do have some funds set up to address historical fuel poverty and it may be that they can repurpose them. They have a monthly Sunday Social on the first of the month, a

bring and share and could potentially extend this. There is a day centre (Lillian Faithful) at Uplands which has a dementia café and a welcome space. St Laurence's has a welcome space and a chatty café, weekly and monthly provision. At the weekend they also have a lot of tea and coffee mornings and the youth club considering adding in a meal once a month. As a next step we would should make sure we link up to The Salvation Army, Long Table, Marah, P3 etc.

Jaqui – Most of the daytime and evenings are booked, either for PCG activities or other community groups (dance groups, support groups etc). Pay as you can food model – community café on a Wednesday afternoon (well used, lots of Archway students) already quite busy and will get busier. Also have drop in sessions with CAB, Independence Trust, Social Prescribers, P3. Pretty close to capacity, except perhaps for the weekend, where they are starting a Saturday Social, initially every other Saturday, with some food element. Tiddlywinks and Kids Stuff sessions also. They have wifi and computers that people can use. Don't have laundry facilities or showers. Operate with the other food hubs getting more organised and opening up new food streams. The heating is the main issue, one month last year they got hit with a £1800 bill, and they don't have reserves.

Adrian – Primarily volunteers running these schemes and putting more pressure on them to do more work isn't fair. So we need funding and we need to reach out to wider volunteer response. We need a response on the scale of the Coronavirus Response – harnessing neighbourhood groups and street wardens. WRVS has a large database of volunteers and enables people to tap into individual tasks. Has also approached Simon Pickering about whether there is a role in this for Ecotricity in this response. The response was to come to them with needs once we have them – spaces, staff resources, furniture etc.

Stella – There are a lot of spaces that could be included, is there some way pubs can be used as warm spaces as they have some of this infrastructure in space. Would schools be able to stay open later? Could the WI locally help out? Could tents or similar be used to creating smaller, warmer spaces in larger ones. Thinks could we approach some of the bigger businesses in Stroud for their support as well.

Alick – there is an embarrassment factor to this, people might struggle to access support. People might be more likely to go to the places they are already comfortable in – pubs, community centre events – need to look to financially support those spaces and ensure they can maintain their offering or expand it.

Jaqui – lives in independent living and they do have facilities like lounge and laundry space – some of these could be opened up for more use with SDC (or whoever manages those spaces) support.

Josie – Trinity is an eco and food hub, also hosts food bank sessions three times a week and Independence Trust once a week. They are planning to have a community café open Friday lunchtime and start it from mid Sept, as well as a possible Sunday afternoon session. It is an expensive building to heat, with a very old boiler. They need funding for the immediate heating costs but it would also make sense to look at longer term measures to make the space more efficient. You can look at the website to see what their schedule is.

Key Take aways:

- **Funding is needed** – There is potential at a District level to pull together a costed plan that can then be put to Gloucestershire Funders. We also need to advocate at SDC and GCC level for additional funds, including inviting their representatives to the next meeting. There is also the possibility of having a crowd funded/donations-based element.
- **We need more people in the room** – it would be great to have the next meeting be face to face and start to invite those wider organisations that might be able to offer their support and knowledge to the project.
- **Everyone was invited to contact Kate/Laura/Miranda with ideas, opportunities or concerns. Emails to be circulated with notes from the meeting.**

Next Steps:

- Laura will send out the minutes and timetable of current offerings
- Kate will book a venue for our next meeting, face to face in a fortnight
- Kate, Laura and Miranda will send out invites to those wider organisations suggested

Communications Strategy update 2

AUTHORS

Town Clerk

CONSULTEES

Deputy Clerk, Green Spaces manager

Communications Working Group

Personnel Working Group

Communications Contractor

FOR MEETING

Council 12th September 2022

RECOMMENDATION

Approve a new Communications and Engagement Strategy and Action Plan.

Confirm changes to the Communications Contractor's contract.

Delegate appointment of a new Communications and Engagement post to the Personnel Committee.

REPORT

Following discussions with the Communications Working Group a new Communications and Engagement Strategy has been drafted (**Appendix A**). Some of the content is based on material produced for the Council in 2021 by Breakthrough Communications, but it has been rewritten to address concerns originally raised by the Finance and Policy WG that the actions within it needed to be separated out.

The separate Action Plan (**Appendix B**) sets out the tasks required to deliver the strategy and the staff resources required. A job description and person specification for a new Communications and Engagement post has been drafted for review by the Personnel Committee.

The current Communications Contractor has provided valuable advice on the new post and how it would impact on her current contract. It is proposed to remove the production of the newsletter from her contract once the new post has been recruited. This will leave the following tasks:

Articles

In a 12 month period:

Provide in electronic form 30 written pieces that may be features/articles/press releases. A minimum of 4 written pieces should be produced in each two month period. These may form the basis of the 6 newsletters below.

All written pieces must be approved by the Town Clerk and any member of the Council named in the piece prior to the date of submission for publication.

We require you to:

- Develop and present ideas for and proactively research and write the pieces (in consultation as necessary with the Editorial Group and the Clerk)

- Provide photographs and illustrations to enhance the interest and informational quality of the news articles or features,
- Arrange photo opportunities with local media in liaison with the Clerk
- Proof all material to a professional standard and make corrections as needed

Your articles and illustrations will be uploaded to our website and Facebook page in-house.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

No specific implications.

FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

A draft job description and person specification are attached, (**Appendices C and D**). The Personnel WG felt that in order to be effective and relieve workload pressure on other staff the post should be at a higher level and with a more substantial salary. It is therefore recommended that the salary scale for the post should be in the range £25,419 (SCP 18) - £28,226 (SCP 23) and that the post should be for 30 hours per week. This would equate to an annual cost, including PAYE and pensions of between £26,692.47 and £29,789.92, not including the 2022 pay award.

This is higher than the sum included in this year's budget (£22,454), but as it will be late in the financial year before the post is filled, there will be no deficit. There is a risk that in the current competitive market that we will not be able to fill the post at this salary, so it may be necessary to review the salary scale if this happens.

The separate Communications Contract would in future be based on 1.5 days a month at £275 a day, equivalent to £4,950 pa, (currently £8,900). At this level the contract would not need to be put out to tender. Allowance should be made for slightly more hours for a few months during handover to the new employee, this can be covered from the current budget.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

When considering commissioning the Communications Strategy the Finance and Policy WG were mindful of the need to resolve concerns about how to reach residents who are excluded from our normal communications. There are a number of actions in the plan relating to this.

CO2 IMPLICATIONS

Stroud Town CAN is an essential part of the Council's strategy relating to climate change so any working relating to community engagement regarding this will have a direct, but unmeasurable, impact.

The draft Strategy also explores opportunities to make better use of online engagement as opposed to face-to-face, which has implications for personal travel carbon costs.

HB 5/9/2022

Stroud Town Council Communications and Engagement Strategy

DRAFT

Introduction

During 2021 and 2022 Stroud Town Council has reviewed its strategy with regard to communications and community engagement. Breakthrough Communications were commissioned to work with councillors and council officers to review the Council's current work and develop proposals for a new strategy. This document is based on a report produced by Breakthrough Communications and then further refined through discussion and deliberation by the Council's Communications Working Group.

Purpose of this Strategy

The Strategy aims to support the Council in achieving its mission and vision:

Mission: Serving the people of Stroud to create a thriving, sustainable community

Vision Statement: Stroud is a resilient and vibrant community, where everyone is welcome

It is a living document that will be reviewed from time to time to ensure the Council can meet the challenges of an ever-changing communications landscape.

This Strategy sets out how the Council will engage with the community in the future, building on existing relationships and creating new ones. Most importantly it sets out how the Council will more effectively engage with the community it represents. A key aim is to build a link between the Council's priorities and communications objectives.

Our communications and engagement objective

A Council with a distinct identity that takes a strategic approach to communications and engagement

Our aims

We want to:

- Listen to and involve the community in shaping our priorities, budgets and services
- Be transparent and open about the decisions that we make
- Empower and support the community to deliver positive change
- Embrace all forms of communications that help us to engage with our audiences
- Recognise that our formal communications are only a small part of how we engage with people
- Take a collaborative approach to delivering our strategic objectives

Our objectives

We will:

- Recognise the importance of involving the public in decision making
- Be transparent and accessible
- Target our communications carefully so that we reach everyone we need to
- Help people to understand where to go for help and services
- Develop a recognisable identity and communications style
- Become more recognizable as a friendly and welcoming organisation
- Protect privacy and confidentiality
- Be clear on our strategic priorities
- Make effective and efficient use of social media and the council website
- Deliver effective communications and engagement for projects
- Manage emergencies well
- Support councillors to play a role in our communications and engagement
- Provide adequate resourcing to meet the Council's communications and engagement needs
- Engage positively with the local/national media
- Support key partners, businesses and stakeholders towards achieving shared objectives.
- Provide clarity for staff and councillors on their roles relating to communications and engagement
- Strengthen our asset-based community development approach

A note on Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)

The Council's approach to community development is based on the Asset-Based Community Development model (ABCD), which recognises that the community in Stroud holds many strengths and assets and that the Council's role is to nurture and support local people and organisations to develop ideas and projects that benefit the community. This approach is key to delivering the Council's mission of ***Serving the people of Stroud to create a thriving, sustainable community.***

The dedicated Community Development Officer works alongside the community at grassroots level using this model, but it also informs the Council's approach to wider community interactions and engagement, which are focused on enabling people and organisations to drive forward sustainable change. The aim is to stimulate an environment in which people and organisations feel empowered to deliver things themselves. It is recognised however, that sometimes resources may be hard to find, so the Council also offers a range of community grants to support community initiatives.

The diagram below shows how the ABCD approach differs from previous deficit-based approaches which focus on solving problems, rather than empowering people to address their own needs, drawing on their own strengths and gifts.

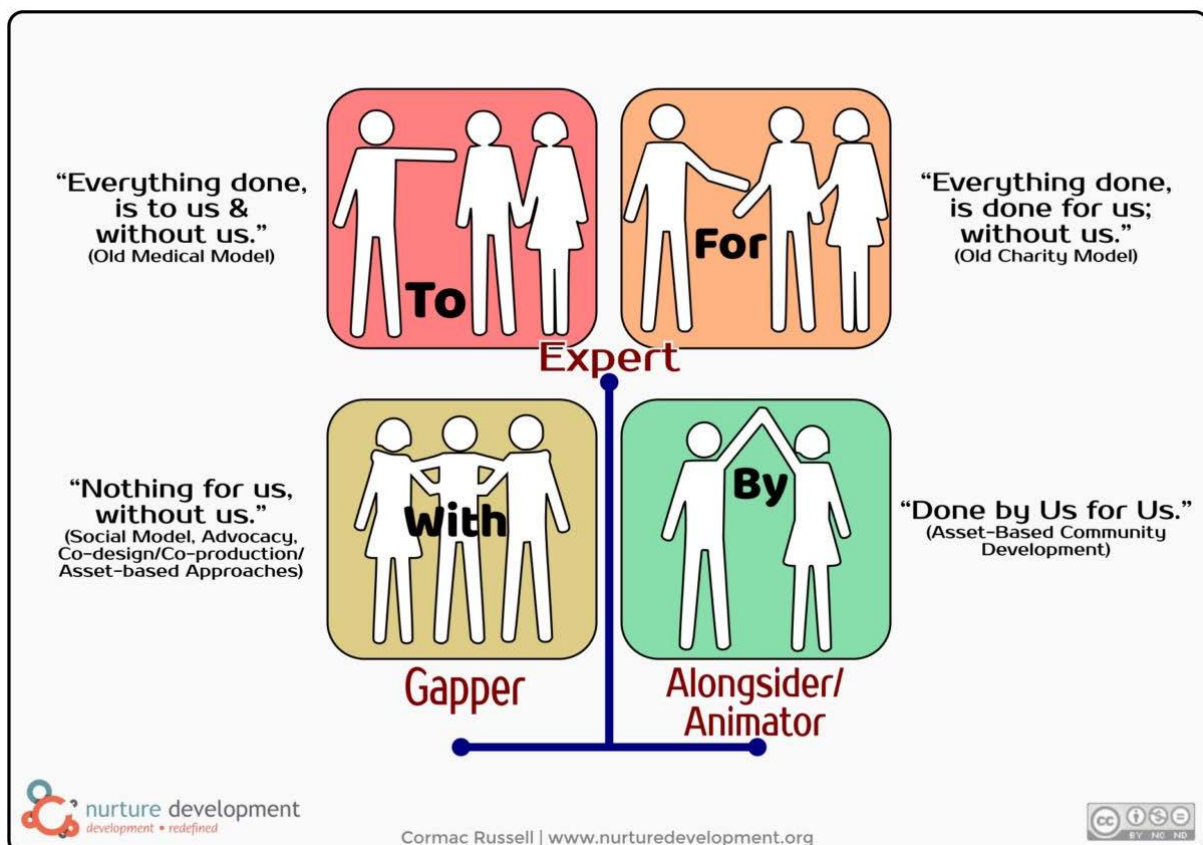


Figure 1 ABCD diagram (Cormac Russell <https://twitter.com/cormacrussell/status/1061341407795990530>)

A more detailed guide to the ABCD approach can be found at:

<https://www.nurtureddevelopment.org/asset-based-community-development/>

The role of officers and councillors

Every officer and councillor has a role to play in communications and engagement. Everyone will be supported to share the Council's story through their work.

Through their work officers and councillors can act as champions for both the Council and the community. Messages must be consistent and carefully targeted to different stakeholders and key audiences.

Key partners, businesses and stakeholders

The Council works with key partners, businesses and stakeholders towards achieving shared objectives. Key goals are:

- To ensure that we reach as wide an audience as possible;
- That we consistently deliver shared priorities and objectives, and;
- That we amplify shared campaigns, for instance those related to well-being, biodiversity and the climate emergency.

A significant focus will be on supporting the development of the Stroud Town CAN, focusing on enabling partner organisations to broaden their reach to the community on projects and campaigns relating to carbon reduction and nature recovery.

Integrating communications and engagement with wider strategy

To make the best use of resources it is important to focus communications on topics and concerns that are consistent with the Council's wider strategy.

To assist with this a set of communications objectives has been produced for each of the Council's objectives. This can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

[Appendix 2](#) suggests some key communications messages linked to each of the Council's objectives.

Voice

Despite not currently having a style guide the Council does have a reasonably consistent voice which has been described as: formal, professional, technical and information giving (i.e. not always engaging).

This voice is appropriate for certain communications channels and in certain contexts. However, there is an aspiration for the Council to have a voice that is:

- Open
- Confident
- Knowledgeable, but not full of jargon
- Friendly and helpful
- Encourages collaboration
- Informal but not inappropriate

To achieve a shift to the new default voice a style guide and relevant communications tools and resources will be put in place.

Communications and engagement channels

Website

The website is well used and understood as a communications channel. It should continue to be the focal point for the Council's communications, acting as a place that brings together all key information and integrates the Council's various communication channels.

Social media

Opportunities exist to make better use of existing channels, extend into other channels and make better use of video. Currently the most used channels are Facebook and Twitter, with occasional use of LinkedIn and YouTube. A number of actions are included in the attached Action Plan. Some ideas for making better use of video are included in [Appendix 4](#).

A key area for improvement is the need for a more coherent approach to managing social media, which at the moment tends to be used more for broadcasting or providing information rather than engaging. Social media could be strategically managed and used to deliver engaging content across a broader range of channels, recognising that competition for attention is fierce, so consideration needs to be given to the cost benefit of focusing resources in this direction.

Printed newsletters

Four editions of the 'About Town' newsletter are currently produced each year. Two editions are physically delivered and two are digitally delivered via email and digital platforms (social media and the website). It is designed and edited externally.

Generally, the newsletter is well regarded. It's a good quality publication that has a clear and professional style and makes good use of engaging photos. Some ideas for simple improvements have been included in the attached Action Plan. There is also the potential to reconsider the frequency of delivery and developing e-Newsletters. Some of the production of the newsletter could be brought in house – see Resource Requirements below.

Public facing officers

All officers of the Council have a public facing role, but those with the highest contact include: the Community Development Officer; the Green Spaces Team (particularly the Rangers); the Assistant Clerk, and; the Administration Officer.

Public facing officers engage enthusiastically with the community and have been well trained on engaging effectively. There is the potential for greater participation through other organisations and networks.

It would be helpful for all officers, but particularly those in a public facing role, to have clear messages for use when engaging with the community

Press and media

Press releases are issued regularly and published in the News section of the website and on social media. Writing press releases and managing media relations are part of the current Communications Contractor's role.

There is potential to regularly reach a wider audience by having a regular column in the local newspaper.

In difficult situations, which challenge the Council's reputation, clear leadership and communications will be provided to inform and reassure the public. To support this processes to be followed should be agreed and there is scope for crisis communications training for senior officers and councillors

Resource requirements

Delivery of this strategy and the attached Action Plan will require a significant commitment of staff resources, which have been partly anticipated by the inclusion of a provisional sum for a new communications officer and communications activities in the 2022–2023 budget.

These budgets will be formalised by reference to the attached Action Plan, which has also been used to analyse the roles of existing officers and develop a job and person specification for the new post.

In order to make the best use of existing resources it is recommended that strategic oversight and management of communications is retained by the Town Clerk, with support from the Deputy Clerk and Green Spaces Manager, but with the new post providing significant support in terms of:

- external communications across the council,
- managing the overall delivery and implementation of this strategy,
- implementing a resource-appropriate council-wide communications and engagement plan, with key deliverables and timescales, across each service area and channel,
- creating and developing high-quality content,
- monitoring and reporting on KPIs,
- using a range of tools and techniques to proactively communicate and engage with different audiences using identified key messages, and
- regularly liaising with staff from each service area, to understand the issues, their needs and requirements, as well as, messaging issues.

Communications Contractor

This strategy has implications for the existing contracted out communications work, which will need to be renegotiated. A separate report on the proposed changes will be presented to the Personnel Committee for approval.

Monitoring and reporting

The impact and effectiveness of the council's communications and engagement needs to be consistently monitored. This information will be used to inform budget setting and communications priorities. Some key performance indicators are set out in [Appendix 3](#).

Regular monitoring reports will be presented to the Finance and Policy Committee. The strategy will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1: Communications Objectives Linked to Strategic Objectives

No.	OBJECTIVE	COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES
1	A carbon neutral town which recognises the limits of the global environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight success and work towards achieving carbon neutrality • Signpost residents to sources of advice and support • Report back to residents on progress made on projects • Represent the community's views on issues • Further develop and sustain partnership working arrangements to support carbon reduction
2	A prosperous town in which the economy generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, so that people can secure quality employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with others to capture sufficient data to be able to develop insights and highlight opportunities • Make clear the role the Town Council plays in supporting growth • Further develop and sustain partnership working arrangements to drive economic and employment growth
3	A town with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic, and ecological resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the work undertaken to protect green space and to promote biodiversity • Focus communications on the positive contribution that the Green Spaces Team plays in creating a sustaining a functioning ecosystem • Build, sustain and promote partnership arrangements with others with the goal of enhancing the economy and the environment • Develop communications channels with audiences and parts of the community engaged in the protection and enhancement of the natural environment • Promote specific aspects of the Council's services and events that support the natural environment and biodiversity • Raise awareness about the emergency plan • Further develop and sustain partnership working arrangements to support nature recovery
4	A town in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the work of the Community Development Officer to promote initiatives in this area and drive positive change • Promote projects and work that the Council does to improve well-being • Actively highlight activities residents and visitors can undertake to improve their physical and mental well-being • Work with partners to promote active and healthy lifestyles that have positive long-term health benefits for individuals and the community

No.	OBJECTIVE	COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the role the Town Council has played in the Neighbourhood Development Plan to help achieve high quality housing • Stress the ongoing role the Council plays in helping to shape plans and strategies related to well-being
5	A town where people can fulfil their potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus communications on projects that have provided opportunities or raised aspirations for certain specific groups (young people, those with disabilities, those with mental health issues) • Gather information that demonstrates that projects and funding are having a material impact on increasing equality in the town • Ensure that all sections of the community can access and take part in surveys and consultations • Work with partners to promote activities that improve outcomes and highlight any successes • Develop responsive mechanisms to measure the communities' assets, needs, opportunities, rights, and responsibilities. Such information should be gathered and regularly reviewed • Demonstrate the measures the council has taken to encourage diversity within its workforce and amongst councillors • Clearly advertise the opportunities that the community has to make its voice heard or to have a say in decision making • Develop ways of co-producing communications materials with key audiences • Develop communications that support an asset based approach with the objective of supporting community initiatives • Proactively listen to and seek views from all parts of the community, including individuals and groups that may not regularly interact with the council • Specifically reach out to under-represented audiences and those that have lower engagement with the Council • Embrace the benefits of face-to-face communications when it is possible to do so • Utilise the role of the Community Development Officer to develop effective engagement and to promote initiatives and the Council's priorities
6	An attractive, viable, safe and well-connected community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage people to visit the Town, refreshing in people's minds what shops, services, facilities, and open spaces are available • Promote awareness of the visitor and tourism offer for the wider area • Work to make the Council's buildings more accessible and open to the community • Highlight the achievements of the Council

No.	OBJECTIVE	COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to make the Town's public spaces more accessible • Develop mechanisms to promote collaboration and the sharing of information between partner organisations • Celebrate and highlight success all year round (particularly at the Stroud Town Awards) • Actively promote and support the work of those improving transport and road safety
7	A vibrant town, where culture makes a significant contribution to people's wellbeing and the economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly gather information about cultural events and opportunities that members of the community can participate in • Promote opportunities for the community to engage in cultural events, particularly those that promote learning, health, wellbeing and the enhancement of biodiversity • Highlight the work of the Council in enhancing the environment and the contribution it has in developing sustainable forms of living, working, travelling, and visiting • Collaborate with the community and partners to ensure the Town is well connected • Play an active role in developing and promoting the creative and cultural economy

Appendix 2: Communications Messages Linked To Strategic Objectives

No.	OBJECTIVE	KEY MESSAGES
1	A carbon neutral town which recognises the limits of the global environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stroud Town Council will prioritise projects and, where appropriate, provide funding for initiatives that will protect our environment, promote biodiversity and tackle the climate crisis. • Working with others as part of the Stroud Town CAN we support people to live sustainable climate and nature friendlier lives, and to build stronger, fairer and greener communities. • We are working hard to reduce the Council's carbon footprint. For instance: Use of an electric van, LED lighting in parks and making improvements to our buildings.
2	A prosperous town in which the economy generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, so that people can secure quality employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stroud Town Council is working to create a prosperous town with a strong economy and drive growth in employment. • Our Neighbourhood Development Plan 'Shaping the Heart of Stroud' supports the development of Stroud's economy. For instance, the development of a 'Canal market town', making transport improvements and encouraging investment in development sites. • We support proposals and work with key stakeholders to drive the creation of decent jobs and improve people's skills and education.
3	A town with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic, and ecological resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As responsible owners and managers of land we actively promote biodiversity in all our green spaces. For instance: less mowing, planting native trees and hedges, rewilding, introducing nest boxes and general habitat improvements. • We take seriously the impacts of climate change and are prioritising plans to deal with its impact. • We will work with other organisations and projects that seek to promote biodiversity, support our local ecosystems or tackle climate change related issues.
4	A town in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stroud Town Council actively supports projects and initiatives that improve physical and mental wellbeing. For instance, we are supporting the development of local community hubs and residents' groups. • As part of our role in the planning process we will promote the development of high-quality housing that meets the needs of residents.

No.	OBJECTIVE	KEY MESSAGES
5	A town where people can fulfil their potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We listen to people and value what they have to say. On a regular basis we engage with the community to hear what people have to say. • Stroud Town Council is focused on making Stroud a fair and equal place where people can reach their full potential. • We will support community action, projects and initiatives that meet our broad aims. • We will support people in Stroud to bring about social change, improve the quality of life in their local area and shape their own futures. • Stroud Town Council is open and accessible to all. • We ensure people know how they can affect the decision making process. • We encourage people from diverse backgrounds to stand for the Town Council and to join our staffing team.
6	An attractive, viable, safe and well-connected community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stroud Town Council is working to ensure that Stroud continues to be a great place to live, work, visit and study in. • We are committed to making our public spaces and buildings accessible to all. • Stroud Town Council is committed to securing improvements to public transport and to improve road safety. • Stroud has a vibrant community and we have a lot to celebrate. Through our Stroud Town Awards we highlight success and achievements.
7	A vibrant town, where culture makes a significant contribution to people's wellbeing and the economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stroud Town Council is focused on ensuring that everyone can play an active role in the culture of the Town. • We work to stage and promote sustainable cultural events and opportunities that support our key objectives relating to biodiversity and wellbeing.

Appendix 3: key performance indicators

The following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be used to monitor the reach and effectiveness of communications. KPI tracking to be undertaken on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis.

Digital (online):	Data	Frequency
Digital surveys	Feedback and responses received	For every survey
	Participation rate	For every survey
	Analysis of surveys - tracked year on year	Annually
Website	Page views and behaviours	Monthly
	Length of visit on each website page	Monthly
	Which pages are accessed by users and user journey	Quarterly
Social media:	All channels – number of followers	Monthly
- Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post reach • Post engagement • Reactions • Comments • Shares • Photo views • Link clicks • Hide all posts • Unfollows 	Monthly
- Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tweets • Followers • Tweet impressions • Profile visits • Mentions 	Monthly
- LinkedIn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Followers • Post impressions • Unique visitors 	Monthly
- YouTube	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views • Watch time (hours) • Subscribers 	Monthly
Messages received	Number of messages received through different channels, (email and social media)	Quarterly
Surveys	Feedback and responses received to print-based surveys	For every survey
	Analysis of surveys - tracked year on year	Annually
	Face-to-face conversations - Green Spaces Team, Community Development Officer, councillors	Quarterly
Events	Event based surveys - enquiring how people found about the event	For every event
	Number of people attending events	For every event
News media	Press release coverage	Quarterly

Appendix 4: Ideas for video content

Area of service / channel	Time/Effort involved	Details
Council website home page	Quick win	Create a short (1-2 mins) 'welcome' video from a councillor, welcoming users to the site and summarising what users can access, and signposting appropriately
Social media (including YouTube)	Quick win	Consider streaming some committees or full council to social media (preferably Facebook). This might require some investment in equipment
Social media (including YouTube)	Quick win	Hold a virtual meeting on key topics (or even just a 'meet the council'-style meeting) and stream to social media, to encourage and drive positive engagement with the council. This might require some investment in equipment
Council website Social media (including YouTube)	Quick win	Either pre-record or ideally go 'live' with short, seasonal or topical messages from officers/councillors on social media
You Tube	Some time and effort required - including editing	A series of videos explaining in simple terms the Neighbourhood Plan and the role the Council plays in the planning process
You Tube	Some time and effort required - including editing	A series of videos highlighting projects and initiatives relating to key objectives (e.g. wellbeing, climate emergency, culture, etc)

Appendix 5: A one page message guide

Our approach

- Be transparent and open
- Communicate clearly in plain English
- Make clear the ways in which our community can support and inform decision making
- Ensure that any decisions we make are accessible
- Recognise that our communications are more than just our formal communications
- Embrace all forms of communications that help us to engage with our audiences
- Take a collaborative approach
- Build a genuine two-way conversation with our audiences
- Listen to and allow the community to shape priorities, budgets and services
- Strengthen our asset-based approach in which we will empower and support the community with initiatives

Our vision and key messages

Our vision for Stroud is a resilient and vibrant community, where everyone is welcome.

Our key messages:

- **Protecting our environment:** We are focused on tackling the climate and nature crisis affecting us all and protecting our local environment
- **Promoting equality and opportunity:** We are working to make Stroud a safer, fairer and more equal place where everyone is able to realise their full potential
- **Prioritising wellbeing:** We take a lead on wellbeing and support projects that contribute to people leading happier healthier lives
- **Connecting Stroud:** We are working for a better-connected Stroud, with a vibrant arts scene, stronger economy, and employment opportunities for all
- **Community is at the heart of everything we do:** We support projects and initiatives that bring people together and support our vibrant community in Stroud
- **Stroud Town Council is serving the people of Stroud to create a thriving, sustainable community**
 - Our priority is to provide a great service for the people of Stroud. We run a wide range of services, and we will clearly signpost people to services that we do not provide.
 - We are open to new ideas and ways of working. We want to hear what you have to say

Appendix 6: Key points to consider when conducting surveys:

- Ideally carry out a survey in both print and digital formats, to ensure maximum return
- Printed version of the survey: either delivered to every house through a reliable delivery service or through Royal Mail's Door To Door service (which delivers based on Post Code sectors). Alternatively deliver to local venues, such as cafes, leisure centres, libraries, etc and signpost people to collect from there, as well as having some centrally available at the council
- Digital version of the survey: promoted through the council's website, eNewsletter and across all social media channels. Make use of paid-for social media advertising (especially on Facebook and Instagram), which allows you to effectively target anyone living within Post Code sectors within the Council's boundaries, even if they don't currently engage/follow/like the council on social media
- Promote using local media - press releases to local newspapers, publications, radio etc all work well if the survey has the right media angle
- Consider what you're trying to achieve, and what you want to know. Ideally have a balance of open and closed questions, with the closed questions being binary choices, scales or multiple choice options
- Consider the effective use of digital surveys: Tools such as TypeForm or Survey Monkey are both powerful, inexpensive and provide reasonable built-in reports for closed questions
- Consider whether to outsource the entire process to a third-party company to manage the survey process end-to-end

Communications and Engagement Action Plan

Who:

Managers (Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Green Spaces Manager)

Admin and GS Team (Assistant Clerk, Admin Assistant, Project Admin Assistant, Rangers)

Comms Team (Comms contractor, Comms Assistant)

Project Managers (Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Green Spaces Manager, Project Officer, Comm Dev Officer)

Our Priorities	We will:	Actions	Who	When
...involving the public in decision making	Avoid consultation fatigue by spacing engagement exercises out	Develop a robust communications and engagement timetable to ensure that resource requirements are spread out through the year.	M C	Annually
...involving the public in decision making	Involve residents in budget setting	Do an annual budget consultation to assess priorities for spending before Committees consider their budgets.	M C	Annually
...involving the public in decision making	Involve residents in budget setting	Include Participatory Budgeting for some areas of expenditure, e.g., youth budget.	M C	2023-24
Being transparent and accessible	Ensure that all documents, images, websites and social media are optimized for online accessibility.	Check that the website meets best practice and legal requirements for accessibility.	A C	Annually
Being transparent and accessible	Ensure that all documents, images, websites and social media are optimized for online accessibility.	Provide all staff with training and support on how to make documents and images accessible, including use of online resources.	M C P A	2022-23
Being transparent and accessible	Ensure that all documents, images, websites and social media are optimized for online accessibility.	All documents and materials checked before publication.	M C P A	Always
Being transparent and accessible	Ensure that people who do not have internet access can access consultations and information	Provide paper or face to face alternatives to online consultations	A C	Always
Being transparent and accessible	Ensure that people who do not have internet access can access consultations and information	Paper copy of newsletter delivered to every household in Stroud twice a year.	C	Biannually
Being transparent and accessible	Support members of the public to attend and participate in Council and Committee meetings.	Advertise Full Council meetings on social media.	A C M	Always
Targeting our communications carefully ...	Use different approaches to broaden the Council's reach to parts of the community who are not currently engaged.	Assess where the gaps are, by analysis of data collected for previous consultations.	C	2023-24
Targeting our communications carefully ...	Specifically improve our engagement with younger people who have been underrepresented in previous engagement work.	Research better ways to engage with: Younger people (potential to use: TikTok, Instagram?)	M C	2023-24
Targeting our communications carefully ...	Specifically improve our engagement with younger people who have been underrepresented in previous engagement work.	Research better ways to engage with: other under-represented communities.	M C	2023-24
Targeting our communications carefully ...	Specifically improve our engagement with younger people who have been underrepresented in previous engagement work.	Make greater use of video, photos and images. See Appendix 4 for video ideas.	C	2023-24
Targeting our communications carefully ...	Make sure that the right channels are used, while making best use of available staff resources.	Run an engagement exercise on people's preferences to help design a more targeted communications schedule.	C	2022-23
Targeting our communications carefully ...	Make sure that the right channels are used, while making best use of available staff resources.	Experiment with alternatives to regular social media (Facebook and Twitter), which are over-crowded and resource intensive.	C	2023-24
... recognisable identity and communications style	Use Plain English wherever we can. Exceptions may apply for some documents, e.g., legal agreements	Remove legal and technical language where possible, e.g., "decided" instead of "resolved"	M C	2023-24

... recognisable identity and communications style	Draw up communications guidance for staff including a style guide covering:	Develop a style guide covering: Consistency in language - ensuring clear, robust and consistent messaging around key issues such as the climate and nature emergencies, for example, "global heating", not "global warming". See link for some suggestions about terms for the natural world. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/aug/09/forget-the-environment-new-words-lifes-wonders-language	M C	2023-24
... recognisable identity and communications style	Draw up communications guidance for staff including a style guide covering:	Develop a style guide covering: The tone and language to be used in different contexts and provide guidance for officers. Recognise that in the right context a more informal tone will be more engaging, receive more views and be shared more often.	M C	2023-24
... recognisable identity and communications style	Draw up communications guidance for staff including a style guide covering:	Develop a style guide covering: Advice on appropriate terminology to be used when writing about equalities matters.	M C	2023-24
... recognisable identity and communications style	Draw up communications guidance for staff including a style guide covering:	Develop a style guide covering: Conventions on house-style with regard to abbreviations, punctuation and spellings.	M C	2023-24
... recognisable identity and communications style	Draw up communications guidance for staff including a style guide covering:	Develop a style guide covering: Links to relevant reference sources to avoid being overly prescriptive.	M C	2023-24
... recognisable identity and communications style	Draw up communications guidance for staff including a style guide covering:	Develop a style guide covering: Use of STC logo	M C	2023-24
... a friendly and welcoming organisation	Make our office more inviting to the public	Reduce the number of screens and barriers	M C A	Quick win
... a friendly and welcoming organisation	Make our office more inviting to the public	Create more opportunities/incentives for people to visit, e.g., offer a recycling collection point – income used to support community groups or a place for people in need to pick up period products	M C A	Quick win
... a friendly and welcoming organisation	Make our office more inviting to the public	Raise awareness of the Keep Safe spaces scheme http://www.keepsafeglos.org/safe_places/	C A	Quick win
... a friendly and welcoming organisation	Make our office more inviting to the public	Use the office more for community events, e.g., fundraising coffee mornings – cake sales etc.	M C P A	2022-23
... a friendly and welcoming organisation	Use friendly language and images – e.g., Park Gardens signs about dogs on wildflower areas	Use humour where appropriate.	C	Quick win
... a friendly and welcoming organisation	Make better use of logo to identify the Council	Public research on how recognizable the logo is. Consider whether it needs refreshing.	C	2023-24
... a friendly and welcoming organisation	Make better use of logo to identify the Council	Identify opportunities to make the logo more visible.	C	2023-24
... a friendly and welcoming organisation	Present a more human face to the public.	Wear name badges or branded uniforms	M A C P	Quick win
...use of social media and the council website	Develop an annual social media strategy summarising what the Council plans to do and what it hopes to achieve, including enough detail to guide actions, but remain flexible enough to respond to events.	Strategy to set out: How the Council will integrate social media with other communications channels.	M C	2023-24
...use of social media and the council website	Develop an annual social media strategy	Strategy to set out: KPIs to allow the Council to understand what is working and what needs improvement.	M C	2022-23
...use of social media and the council website	Develop an annual social media strategy	Strategy to set out: A calendar of annual events and campaigns that will be celebrated and supported, e.g. Earth Day, Road Safety Week etc.	M C	2022-23
...use of social media and the council website	Develop an annual social media strategy	Strategy to set out: Audiences focus.	M C	2022-23
...use of social media and the council website	Develop an annual social media strategy	Strategy to set out: What social media channels will be operated and how they will be used to communicate with different audiences.	M C	2022-23

...use of social media and the council website	Develop an annual social media strategy	Strategy to set out: Broadly set out how stories will be developed and content shared.	M C	2022-23
...use of social media and the council website	Develop an annual social media strategy	Strategy to set out: Consider how success and positive developments will be highlighted effectively.	M C	2022-23
...use of social media and the council website	Develop an annual social media strategy	Consider opportunities for two-way dialogue and call to action points.	M C	2022-23
...use of social media and the council website	Develop an annual social media strategy	Create and sustain engaging stories and content relating to key issues and events, so that more posts form part of a longer conversation.	M C	2022-23
...use of social media and the council website	Develop an annual social media strategy	Increase engagement and recognition by planning and developing stories, issues and events.	M C	2022-23
...use of social media and the council website	Develop an annual social media strategy	Deliver strategically managed and engaging content across selected social channels; adopting a coherent approach balancing content which is broadcasting essential information and more engaging material.	M C	2022-23
...use of social media and the council website	Review use of social media channels:	<u>LinkedIn</u> - consider the purpose of the LinkedIn Company Page, and how it might be used more effectively. In particular what audience it is trying to reach and the content it needs to generate.	M C	2022-23
...use of social media and the council website	Review use of social media channels:	<u>YouTube</u> - consider how YouTube could be used more effectively and attract more subscribers	M C	2022-23
...use of social media and the council website	Review use of social media channels:	<u>Instagram</u> - the Council has 560 followers, but no content is currently being posted. Consider activating Instagram to widen the range of communications channels available and potentially assist in communicating with younger people.	M C	2022-23
...use of social media and the council website	Make more use of website to get across key messages and calls to action (CTAs) as one of the first things that visitors see when they visit the website.	Consider use of a CTA to sign up to email Newsletter or to take part in a survey.	C	2022-23
...use of social media and the council website	Make more use of website to get across key messages and calls to action (CTAs) as one of the first things that visitors see when they visit the website.	Consider use of an introductory video on the home page	C	2022-23
...use of social media and the council website	Make some general website improvements:	Have a stronger branding and identity	C M	2023-24
...use of social media and the council website	Make some general website improvements:	Clearly highlight positive achievements of Stroud Town Council	C	2023-24
... effective communications and engagement for projects	Develop detailed strategic communications plans for all strategic projects	Develop a template to assist project managers with planning project communications and engagement.	C M P	2023-24
Managing emergencies well	In difficult situations we will provide clear leadership and communications to inform and reassure the public.	Provide crisis communications training for senior officers and Members.	M C	2023-24
Managing emergencies well	In difficult situations we will provide clear leadership and communications to inform and reassure the public.	Agree processes to be followed when there is an emergency or communications crisis.	M C	2023-24
Supporting councillors ...	Encourage and support councillor involvement in Council engagement and communications events	Circulate communications and engagement timetable in advance to enable diary planning.	C	Quarterly
Supporting councillors ...	Support attendance at key consultation events.	Provide communications training for members on how to build two-way conversations with the community and effective communications.	M C	2023-24
Supporting councillors ...	Support elected Members to act as champions for both the Council and our community.	Organise "getting to know you sessions" (online if preferred).	M C	As required

Providing adequate resourcing	Ensure that there is sufficient staff capacity and skills	Clearly map out the communications and engagement responsibilities for all members of staff so that everyone knows who does what.	M C	Quick win
Supporting key partners, businesses and stakeholders	Promote events, meetings, consultations or activities in Stroud, or nearby, which are delivered by key partners/partnerships,	Share on social media	C	As required
Supporting key partners, businesses and stakeholders	Prioritise support for: Large community events/festivals, County or District Council matters relevant to Stroud residents (e.g., roadworks), Stroud Town CAN and member organisations, SLA holders, Events and projects funded by Council grants and other events and activities consistent with the Council's strategic priorities.	Create and regularly maintain a database of relevant partners, businesses and stakeholders.	C A	2022-23
Supporting key partners, businesses and stakeholders	Amplify shared campaigns, for instance those related to well-being, biodiversity and the climate emergency.	Maintain connections to relevant partners, businesses and stakeholders on social media, e.g., following on Twitter	C	As required
Providing clarity for staff and councillors on their roles....	Circulate weekly bulletin	Review format of bulletin to make it accessible by email/mobile.	C A	2023-24

Stroud Town Council

Job Description: Communications and Engagement Officer

Salary and Grade: FTE £25,419 (SCP 18) - £28,226 (SCP 23) Pay award pending

Hours of work: 30 per week, including occasional evenings and weekends for which time off in lieu will be given

Responsible to: Town Council, via the Town Clerk

Overview

Reporting to the Town Clerk this post will lead on delivering the Council's Communications and Engagement Strategy and Action Plan. Working across all areas the post will support the council's strategic priorities, e.g. the environment, regeneration, resilience, wellbeing, community development, community safety, the arts and culture.

This post will work alongside an external communications contractor who supports the Council on public relations and writes press releases and news articles for the Council's website.

Job Purpose

To deliver effective communications and engagement for the Council

Key responsibilities

- Have strategic oversight of external communications across the council
- Lead on the implementation of the communications and engagement strategy
- Implement a resource-appropriate council-wide communications and engagement plan
- Create and develop high-quality content,
- Monitor and report on performance relating to communications and engagement
- Use a range of tools and techniques to proactively communicate and engage with different audiences using identified key messages
- Ensure that the council's communications and engagement activities comply with GDPR and equalities requirements
- Regularly liaise with staff from each service area, to understand their issues, their needs, requirements and any messaging issues.
- Develop and maintain an internal style guide

Newsletters and other printed material

- Produce regular newsletters and eNewsletters, including content produced by the Council's Communications Contractor
- Liaise with the Town Clerk on editorial and layout matters
- Proof read all content
- Liaise with external printers, photographers and graphic designers
- Liaise with Assistant Clerk on delivery
- Ensure Council noticeboards are kept up-to-date, with appropriate and relevant ward information

Social media/Town Council website

- Advise Administration Officer and Project Administration officers on sharing and promoting external content relating to local or strategic issues, e.g. road closures or relevant external campaigns

- Create and/or edit content relating to council business and updates from Green Spaces Team

Projects, campaigns and events

- Develop and deliver communications and engagement plans for key Council projects, campaigns and events in partnership with relevant internal project managers
- Deliver an annual budget consultation
- Create and/or edit content relating to physical engagement activities (posters, advertising)
- Create and/or edit content for online engagement such as surveys
- Analyze data from engagement/consultation activities and report on results

Strategic campaigns

- Develop an annual media plan linked to the Council's strategic objectives, using appropriate communication channels, e.g. social media, surveys or newsletters
- Write content relevant to each channel ensuring tone, grammar and voice match target audiences
- Analyze campaign data and report on results

Community engagement

- Plan and deliver engaging community consultations and engagement events to support delivery of council projects and to inform strategic decision making
- Design and deliver an annual budget consultation to assess priorities for spending
- Explore innovations in public engagement to support public involvement in decision making
- Research better ways to engage with under-represented communities.

Internal communication

- Provide regular staff briefings to ensure council messaging is understood, including new issues or projects
- Develop and improve internal communications to ensure staff and councillors are kept up to date with latest news from different service areas and projects
- Create and maintain an internal style guide

Other responsibilities

- Deputise for the Communications Contractor in their absence, whether planned or not
- Any other duties the Council may consider appropriate to the post
- The Communications and Engagement Officer may be required to undergo a DBS check in accordance with the Council's Safeguarding policy
- To attend such conferences, seminars, meetings or training courses as appropriate and as required by the Council
- The Town Council may wish from time to time to amend this job description

Communications and Engagement Officer Person Specification

Area	Essential	Desirable	How assessed
Education	Educated to A-Level standard with 5 GCSEs (including English and Maths) or equivalent NVQ or relevant experience.	Educated to degree level or above in a relevant subject	Certificates
	Communications and engagement training		Certificates
Experience	Awareness of the role of the Town Council and the local government environment	Experience of working in a Council or public facing service	Application form/interview
	Experience of working with a diverse range of stakeholders	Experience of working in a Council or public facing service	Application form/interview
	Experience of using multiple channels to deliver campaigns and tell stories to different audiences		Application form/interview
	Experience of producing website content, newsletters and other written communications		Application form/interview/test
Skills, Abilities & Knowledge	Knowledge of community engagement and consultation techniques		Application form/interview
	Knowledge of offline and digital content and channels		Application form/interview
	Up to date knowledge of communications and public relations best practice		Application form/interview
	Strong IT skills, including using media, Microsoft products and smartphones	Ability to use publishing tools, photoshop and website developer platforms such as Squarespace	Application form/interview
	Excellent oral and written communication skills		Application form/interview
	Hands-on, practical approach to problem solving		Application form/interview
	Excellent organizational skills		Application form/interview
	Attention to detail, especially in copy writing		Test

Area	Essential	Desirable	How assessed
	Awareness of legal requirements, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety • GDPR • Equality 		Application form/interview
Other	Flexibility to attend evening and weekend meetings and events		Application form/interview
	Ability to operate impartially within a political environment		Application form/interview

Area	Essential	Desirable	How assessed
	Excellent oral and written communication skills		Application form/interview
	Hands-on, practical approach to problem solving		Application form/interview
	Excellent organizational skills		Application form/interview
	Attention to detail, especially in copy writing		Test
	Awareness of legal requirements, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Safety GDPR Equality 		Application form/interview
Other	Flexibility to attend evening and weekend meetings and events		Application form/interview
	Ability to operate impartially within a political environment		Application form/interview

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STROUD UNITED CHARITIES

Charity Number 259894

Email: stroudunitedcharities@gmail.com

Tel: 01453 766544

Dear Helen,

I am writing to you in my capacity as Clerk to Stroud United Charities. We are a very small charity that was created in 1971 when six even smaller Stroud charities were combined into a single entity. Even so, our annual income is still only between £1500 - £2000 per annum. I have attached our information sheet which outlines our purpose.

It has become apparent in the past two years that we may no longer be able to function as required by our trust deed due to the falling number of trustees and the difficulty of replacing them.

Our trustees are made up of 5 nominees from the town and parish councils and 5 co-opted trustees. In addition, the Vicar of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Lawrence, Stroud, is listed as the Ex-officio Trustee in our Trust Deed.

Unfortunately, like many similar charities the number of trustees has gradually fallen and we now have just five, the minimum required for us to be quorate. Two of these trustees have indicated that they intend to stand down by the end of the year.

I am therefore writing to those responsible for nominating trustees to ask if Stroud Town Council would be able to put forward at least one trustee. None of the existing trustees were nominated by yourselves.

The workload is minimal, with no more than 3 meetings per year. Most of the applications for grants are dealt with via email.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Paul Weekes
Clerk
Stroud United Charities

STROUD UNITED CHARITIES

Charity Number 259894

Stroud United Charities is a small charity which has funds available to support individuals who can demonstrate a specific need. Our rationale as approved by the Charity Commission is as follows:

“Relief in need to persons in the old urban district of Stroud in cases of distress, sickness and for educational purposes”

The old urban district of Stroud is interpreted as covering these areas:

- Stroud Central
- Cainscross
- Ebley
- Dudbridge
- Paganhill
- Uplands
- Rodborough

Most of our requests come from the following organisations on behalf of individuals or families, for example:

- Family Support Workers from Children’s Centres & Social Services
- Health Visitors
- Local Primary Schools
- Charities working with vulnerable individuals

Grants have been approved to support a wide range of needs such as new carpets, household appliances, storage units for toys, signing lessons for parents of a deaf child, contributions towards residential visits at school and many more. As we have a limited annual income to distribute, these grants tend to be in the region of £100 to £200.

If you are supporting individuals or families who are in financial difficulties and live in one of the areas listed above, we would be pleased to receive applications for grants which should sent to me either via e-mail to stroudunitedcharities@gmail.com or by post to:

Paul Weekes (Clerk)
Stroud United Charities
12 Shepherds Close Stroud
GL5 1RZ

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Weekes