

Agenda item no.	To be added by the Clerk
Report to	Burwash Parish Council
Subject	Burwash e-bulletin
Meeting date	12 th November 2019
Author	CLlr Betty McBride

Background

Burwash Parish Council's Communication Strategy identified the need to have multiple communication channels to increase the reach and efficacy of conversations with parishioners. The Chair writes a column for the two Parish magazines every month and, from time to time, councillors post information on the Burwash Community Facebook page. BPC has updated its website and introduced an App which gives real-time alerts to encourage people to access Council documents, get involved and attend local events, as well as Council meetings.

In the summer, we appealed for a "Communications Angel" from the community who would be willing to work with us on an e-bulletin service, modelled on the highly successful Etchingham model.

Update

Local resident Halina Keep answered the call, and she joined chair Betty McBride and BPC Administrator Rachel Guernier at a meeting with Nicky Menzies to learn more about the Etchingham set up.

Several years ago Nicky's neighbour had a TV she wanted to get rid of - Nicky emailed her friends and the TV was gone in 10 minutes. The e-bulletin grew from there and she now has well over 500 subscribers. In addition to the ever-popular posts - advertising local events, appeals from people wanting a recommendation for a plumber, lost dog notices, local bargains and things for sale or to swap - the bulletin publishes news of Etchingham Parish Council meetings, with links to minutes, documents and agendas.

The service is funded by the Parish Council and now uses the Mailchimp system. It is GDPR compliant. While the entry level MailChimp service is free, Etchingham pays £12 per month (\$14.99) for the recommended standard package.

Nicky reports that she spends around 10 minutes each day cutting-and-pasting posts for the e-bulletin from emails sent directly to her by residents and others. She has technical support from another resident, and they are the only people who can post e-bulletins.

She applies a light-touch approach to moderating the system and says that she has experienced few, if any, problems with content.

Council resolves to:

1. Establish a Burwash e-bulletin as a service to our three-village community and a channel for Council communications, modelled on the Etchingham system.
2. Council agrees to expenditure of £48 to fund this year's MailChimp charge, and will allocate £144 for 2020/21.
3. The launch date will be Mon 9th December 2019.
4. The e-bulletin will be run on a day-to-day basis by Halina Keep.
5. Administrator to set up a dedicated e-bulletin email address, with access restricted to Halina Keep, the Administrator and Chair of Council to provide cover for holidays. The Administrator will provide technical support.
6. Halina and the Administrator will work on a programme to promote the service and attract subscribers, with a launch notice forming part of this month's Parish Matters update in the two Parish magazines.
7. The Chair to write to Nicky Menzies and Halina Keep to thank them on behalf of BPC for their help on this project.