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Report To: Planning and Environment

Date: 14 July 2025

Contact Officer: Mark Jones

Subject: Engagement Update

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## 1. **Background/Purpose**

Review of community engagement events so far since the Community Engagement Officer started his role on 2 June 2025 and a look forward to proposed events.

## 2. **Details**

### 2.1 ***Events review***

Three fetes were attended at local primary schools:

- Tregoze Primary
- Hazelwood Academy
- Oliver Tompkins

All were successful as many parents and children were spoken to. The Splat the Rat game and the sunflower seed giveaways were both popular – an ideal engagement opportunity.

A survey for parents was devised – its purpose, to be used as an ice breaker/conversation starter, but also to find out what people like about West Swindon and what they think could be improved in the area.

The survey also captured the postcode/area a person lives in, any issues and where those issues are; also, whether people want to engage with us and if so how (surgeries, Facebook lives, pop-ups in village centres etc.). If they wanted engagement they were asked to share a contact email so we can send them our quarterly newsletter.

- 2.2 Following the survey, a data base of those who wish to receive our newsletter has been initiated.

### 2.3 **Newsletter Q1 & Q2**

Bumper 'round-up' edition published electronically on the website and social media accounts with page turning software to give it a contemporary look. Work is now beginning on Q3 newsletter which will include a look ahead to events for Q4. Also, as per the 'fete surveys' we are building a database of those who have requested receipt of the newsletter.

2.4 **The Chesters' mural** – St John's students painted one side of the subway, the remaining wall will follow shortly. Social media and media coverage achieved.

2.5 **Engagement Action**

- Invitation to all councillors to meet the engagement officer – ongoing
- Linking with ATB Swindon, Freshbrook Church, Wiltshire Police, SBC Lydiard Park, Edgehill Haven, Peatmoor Guides
- Big Local Engagement event
- Contact several companies which have approached us in the past about litter picking to gauge their interest and to pitch the mural sponsorships

2.6 **Battle of Ellendun**

Ongoing support of Cllr Graham Philpot for this project. Meeting with Beverley Margison (Vision of Wroughton) on Wednesday 9 July to discuss collaboration with Wroughton and West Swindon Parish Council (WSPC).

2.7 **Day in the Life (DIL)**

Social media and website features spot-lighting a member of staff and what their job entails. Mark to go out with the grounds team to gather the material (video, photo, soundbites etc) to feed into features highlighting all aspects of their job.

2.8 **Pop-up surgeries/events**

The weather and lighter evenings will provide optimum conditions for Councillor pop-up events and surgeries across the summer. Events could be pop ups with the gazebo in play areas or streets or taking place after a litter picks. Ideally the timing and locations will be led by local Councillors.

2.9 **Christmas Events**

West Swindon Parish Council has celebrated Christmas in the Parish in previous years with support for the Fire Station Open Day with a grotto and with Christmas tree decorations in the village centres.

This could be expanded with the following:

**Twelve Days of Christmas** – using the theme of 12-days to highlight one achievement story per day from the past year, to be publicised on our website, social media accounts and on our bins and noticeboards.

**Village Centre Christmas Tree/Lights**

Quotes for lit Christmas trees for public locations, these are supplied at a cost in the region of £5,000 depending on size. They would need a license

and a power source. Feedback from other Parishes regarding Christmas lights has indicated that securing the appropriate permissions from Swindon Borough Council can be expensive and challenging. Work will get underway to seek out business sponsorship but the Council could also consider non lit decorations as an option.

### **Christmas Grotto**

Taking into account feedback on the previous Santa's grotto at Westlea Fire Station, the Parish Council could consider creating its own event at a more accessible location e.g The Link Centre/Library. The Parish Council Team could replicate a similar provision to that previously supplied to the Fire Station event. It would be likely that this would reach a greater number of families and would give the Parish Council more control over timings and charging/donations.

### **3. Financial and Budget Considerations**

- 3.1 The Engagement budget of £10,000 will be able to cover the events and activities proposed in this report. External sponsorship will also be sought.

### **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1 That this Committee gives feedback to the Engagement Officer on the best approach to set up pop up surgeries
- 4.2 That this Committee notes the engagement activities proposed in this report.