

**Effective communication and engagement
for town and parish councils
in a post-COVID world**

**Session Handouts for
Participants**



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Breakthrough Communications & Strategies
**We are passionate about connecting councils
with the communities they serve.**



Daniel Purchase James MacCleary **Darren Braddock**
 Co-Director Co-Director Data Protection Expert
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Breakthrough Communications & Strategies Webinar

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How we help parish and town councils connect with their communities



Councillor and Officer Training and Development



Communications Services for Councils Toolkits and Resources



to make life easier for councils

Today's Webinar - An Overview of Communicating with your Community

Your council's strategy and plan for how you will communicate and engage post-COVID

Your council's messages and how you position yourself

Effective ways to communicate and engage



Build a
two-way
conversation

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Where is your council on its journey right now?®



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...and where is your community, on its journey?



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A communications and engagement strategy can be a huge asset to your council:

- Helps your council **communicate more effectively with residents, businesses and the wider community** and impacts how the council is seen and heard
- Sets **tone and direction** communications, helping to support the council's aims and objectives
- Opportunity for **Member buy-in** at all stages, especially in developing messages and shaping council communications policy



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8 steps to build the right strategy for your council

1. Define the **purpose** of the strategy and get **Member buy-in** at every stage of the exercise
2. Review the council's **current and previous communications**
3. Carry out a **council-wide communications analysis**
4. Link your council's existing aims and objectives to **measurable communications objectives**
5. Consider your **council's messages** for different audiences, as well as your **positioning and tone**
6. Consider **appropriate communication channels** for different messages and audiences
7. Put together a work plan to **implement the strategy**
8. **Review, review, review**

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Just what is your council saying?

It's really important to think about you want different audiences to know about you overall, and then what key messages you need to get across.

Good starting questions are:

- What are the **top three things** we want your residents to know about our council?
- For each of those three things, what are the **corresponding communications messages** that we need to get across?



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Your council's positioning, tone and language

- How do you want to be **seen**

and heard by your community?

- What **'tone'** do you use in your council's communications?
- What does your council's **digital voice** sound like?



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A word on your council's 'tone'...

- Your council's tone of voice is important, **especially on social media**

- Parish and town councils are passionate about their communities - **but this isn't**



always reflected in what they
say and how they say it

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What are the best ways to communicate?

Print / hi-visibility communications:

- Council newsletters
- Annual Parish/Town Report (we don't mean the statutory sort!)
- Articles/adverts in local publications
- Press releases
- Flyers/leaflet drops to houses
- Banners / lamp post banners
- Parish notice boards

Digital communications:

- Website
- Council e-Newsletter
- Social media pages/accounts
 - Paid-for social media /

advertising (the digital version of paid-for adverts/articles in local print magazines!) • Content on local websites

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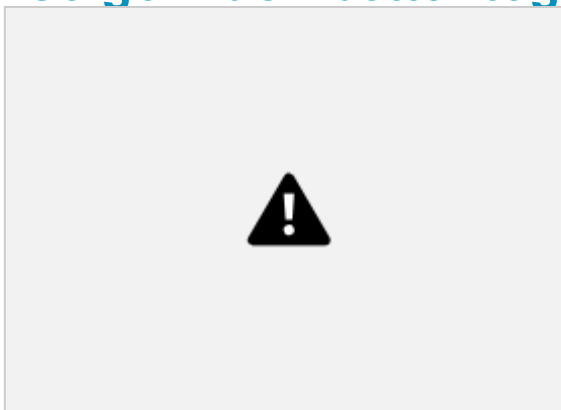
It's a "fish and chips" argument - print and digital also go much better together!

- Getting the **right mix of print AND**

digital communications will ensure you stand the best chance of reaching a large number of people in your community

- **Consider your resources** - both people and financial - and build your communications output around this

- Make use of available **tools, toolkits and resources** available to help you save time and effort



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Turning your website into a communications tool

- Easy to **navigate and use**

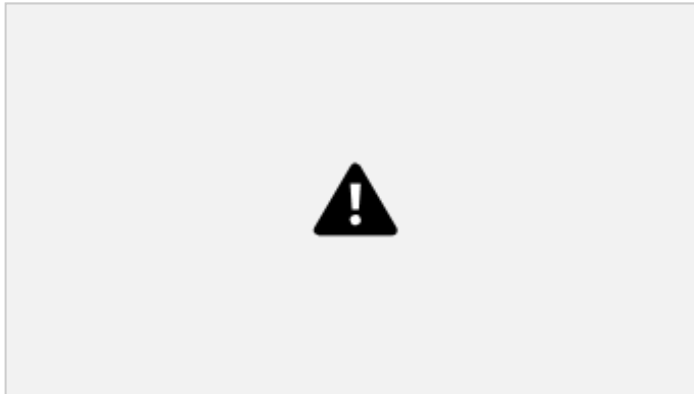
- **Clear signposting** to key services provided by other councils

- **Key information** and messages up front and displayed in a simple way

- Conveys your **messaging and tone**

- Displays well on all devices (**mobile first!**)

- Optimised for **accessibility**



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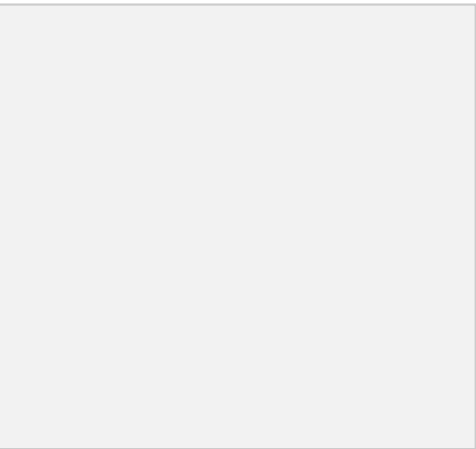
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Which social media platforms should we use?





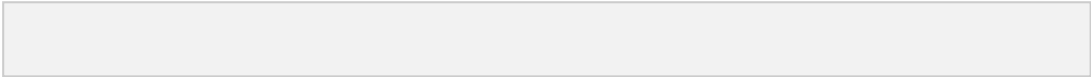
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al media platforms should we use?

**Leading social networks
by share of visits in the
UK, as of June 2020**

Source: statista.com



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Why councils should usually prioritise Facebook



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Making effective use of social media

- Social media offers you a chance to **reach new parts of your community** that wouldn't otherwise engage with you

- **Lots of tools available** to save you time to create engaging content and schedule your posts

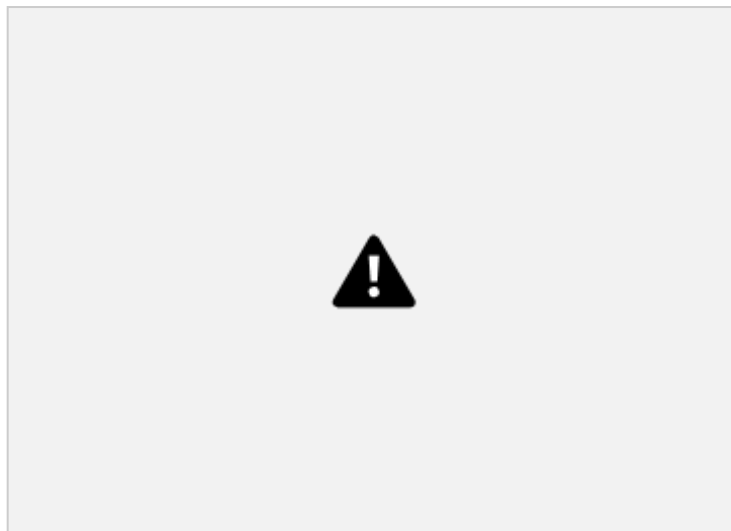
- **Integrate** social media with your website and e-Newsletter

- Be prepared for **responses and questions** and build your plan with this in mind

- Use **videos and Facebook Live** to get your message across more effectively

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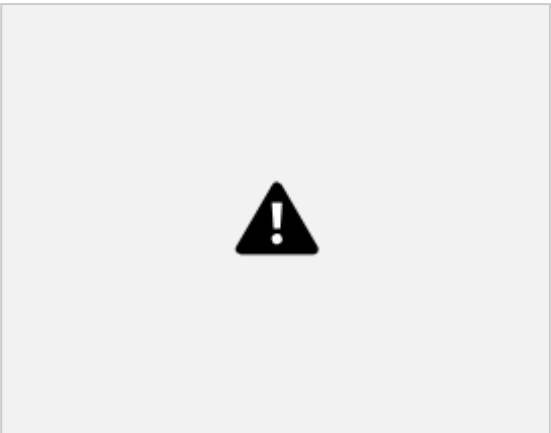


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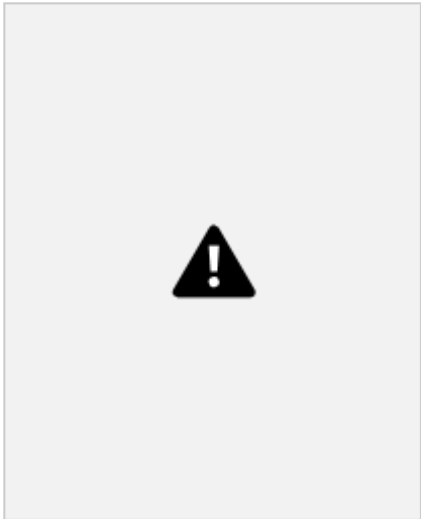
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Two types of Facebook pages for councils



Official council 'page' **Official council civic-role 'page'** © Breakthrough Communications & Strategies Limited 2020. All rights reserved.

Use images to visually tell your stories



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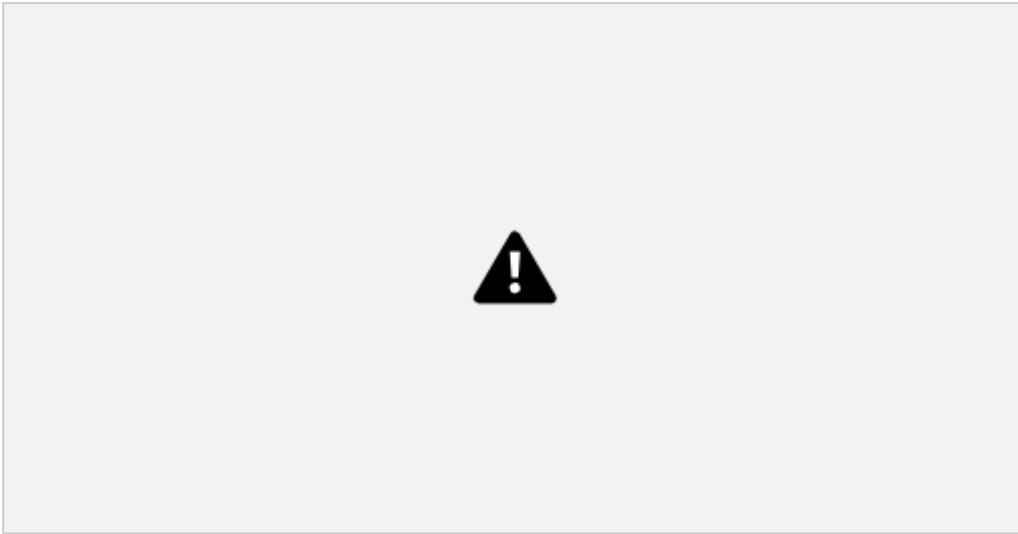
Use video to build engagement



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Live-stream your council meetings to Facebook



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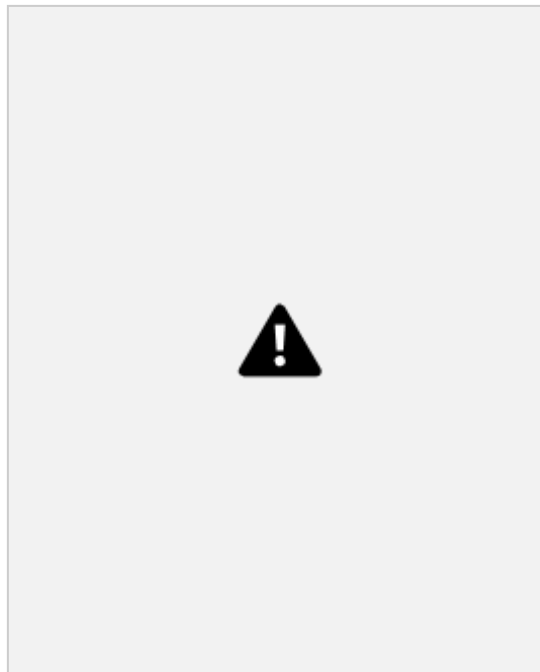
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Council e-Newsletters

- Your residents WANT to hear from you, and this is an EASY and EFFECTIVE way to **keep them updated AND seek feedback**
- You can even just **re-purpose existing content** you've produced for other media
- **Emails can be long or short, can be visual and can signpost** to your website or other local services, for example
- **Integrate with your website and social media** to enable a seamless process for residents to sign-up without taking up valuable Officer time



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Building a sustainable conversation

- Find the **balance that works for your council** between broadcast lots



of
information and engaging in conversation

- **Proactively ask for feedback** in print and digital communications
- **Survey residents** regularly and ideally annually - both digitally and in print
- Hold **virtual 'Town Hall'-style events**, such as 'Ask the Mayor/Chair'

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Some actions for you to try out...

1. **Think about your council's 'messages'** and what you're saying to your community - it's a great opportunity for Member buy-in
2. Think about your **communications mix** and consider one new thing to try or improve
3. Create a **short video for social media once a month** - perhaps from one of the councillors
4. Find **sustainable ways to seek feedback and ask questions** across all your communications
5. Plan to hold at least one **'Virtual Village/Town Hall' meeting** between now and Christmas
6. Consider what **training and development** you, your officers and members need

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Your council can book a free follow-up call with us at:

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