

Freshford Bulletin: Report and recommendations

Background

As reported at the August meeting, I obtained emergency sponsorship from FLISCA for the August issue of the Bulletin because the sponsor had dropped out at the last moment. As a result, Peter King agreed to approach sponsors for funding for the November 2019 and February 2020 issues.

Disappointingly, the organisations Peter approached have decided not to sponsor the Bulletin because they are buying advertising in the Church's new free glossy Parish Magazine. The quarterly Bulletin is now at a great disadvantage because the Parish Magazine comes out monthly, it is now free (getting its income from all the advertising it's attracting), and has a wide circulation covering Freshford, Limpley Stoke and Hinton Charterhouse, rather than just Freshford like the Bulletin.

Depending on size and use of colour, printing costs for the Bulletin range between £270 – £400. The PC cannot afford to fund this on a quarterly basis; therefore, without sponsorship the existing printed version is not viable.

Options

The next issue of the Bulletin is due out in November. I already have copy from a number of village organisations, so a decision from the PC about the options below is needed.

Option 1: Produce a A3 folded newsheet (4 sides of A4 like the Westwood and Limpley Stoke newsletter) at a cost of approx. £45 (based on formula from Parish Magazine Printing, the current printer of the Bulletin). To be funded by the PC.

Option 2: Publish the Bulletin on-line via the PC website and Parish Council Communications. No funding needed.

Option 3: Obtain sponsorship for the November issue from non-commercial village organisations. This will give the PC time to investigate all options fully and prepare the readership for any resulting changes.

Recommendations

All the options above move away from the previous funding model with which I was very uneasy. There is a danger, albeit remote, that PC decision making could be compromised by accepting sponsorship from commercial organisations whose business development plans may have an impact on the community. E.g. planning applications.

I recommend option 3. I have spoken to Nick Stevens, Chair of Friends of Freshford, about funding the November issue of the Bulletin and he is going to put it to the FoF committee. If funding is forthcoming from this source, it will allow the November issue to go to print and will give me time to put together proposals about the future of the Bulletin.

Councillor Jonelle Daniels

08 October 2019