

Freshford Bulletin: The Way Forward. Report and recommendations

Background

As reported at the October meeting, sponsorship for the Bulletin is now hard to come by because sponsors are buying advertising in the Church's free glossy Parish Magazine. The quarterly Bulletin is 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.

Since October I have been in discussion with members of our community and the Bulletin distribution team, whose sponsorship suggestions included approaching farm shops and estate agents, both of which are now advertising in the Parish Magazine. There a number of further reasons why the existing methods of funding and production are not viable. First, as discussed in October 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. Secondly, the printer of the Bulletin is now seriously ill and has restricted his work to the last two weeks of the month and even this reduced schedule may not be sustainable. Finally, based on recent editions of 32-38 pages, current printing costs range between £270 – £400 which FPC cannot afford to fund on a quarterly basis.

Options

Option 1: Reduce the Bulletin to 12 pages, cutting out articles from businesses to whom the existing magazine has effectively provided free advertising, and limiting articles to those from the Parish Council and local voluntary/charity organisations. Three issues a year at a cost of between £100 - £150 per issue depending on use of colour.¹ Funded by FPC. 340 copies distributed in Freshford.

Option 2: Produce an A3 folded newsheet (4 sides of A4 like Westwood). Three issues a year in black and white. The current printer is not interested so I've obtained a quote from Avon Printing Services, Melksham for £63 per issue. Funded by FPC. 340 copies distributed in Freshford.

Option 3: In December I had a meeting with Mark Baines and Karen Grattage, Production Manager and Editor of the Parish Magazine where we discussed FPC taking quarterly full-page in their magazine at a cost of £50 per issue. Funded by FPC. Distributed by the Parish Magazine to 675 households in Freshford, Limpley Stoke and Hinton Charterhouse. The Parochial Church Council is meeting on 13 January 2020 where this idea will be considered.

Option 4: Publish the Bulletin on-line via the PC website and PC comms. No funding needed

NB. Option 3 (and to some extent option 2) to be used as a 'taster' to direct readers to an on-line version of the Bulletin on the FPC website.

Recommendations

I favour option 3 as it means that news from FPC will circulate more widely, thus attracting more people to FPC's website. However, this option is dependent on a redesigned FPC website being operational and until this comes on-line, options 1 and 2 are viable but depends on how much money FPC is able to allocate to fund the Bulletin.

Councillor Jonelle Daniels

06 January 2020

¹ The costs are based on a price list given to Peter King. I have been unable to get up-to-date costs due to the printer's change of work schedule. I am hoping to have these by the PC meeting on 13 January 2020.