

**Report of: Jane Maxwell, East North East Area Leader**

**Report to: Outer North East Community Committee**

**Report author: Kim Regan/Carole Clark [215715]**

**Date: 26<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

**For decision**

## **Facebook Opportunities for Community Committees**

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### **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.0 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of Facebook and how and why Community Committees could use it as a communication tool to help engage with local residents.

### **2. Main issues**

#### **2.1 What is Facebook?**

- 2.2 Facebook is the world's largest social networking site and allows users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages, and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues and connect with groups and organisations they are interested in.

#### **2.3 Why do we want community committees to use Facebook?**

- 2.4 Facebook will allow our Community Committees to connect with a wider audience. It is a useful tool to develop two-way communications and build a stronger social connection with residents who may not otherwise engage with the council.
- 2.5 It will help Community Committees build relationships and show support by sharing useful and interesting information from local media, community groups and residents. It has the added benefit of supporting and encouraging citizenship.
- 2.6 It provides a free communications channel allowing community committees to talk to many people at no cost. Without paying for anything, we can see via Facebook

exactly the number of people and their age, gender and interests in the areas we serve and how people respond and interact with our posts.

## **2.7 Aims of using Facebook:**

- Promote the work of the community committee
- Enhance existing work by involving local people
- Promote opportunities to residents, community groups and parish and town councils including funding opportunities, volunteering opportunities, training and events.

## **2.8 Benefits for the community committee**

- Increase the visibility and enhance the identity of community committees
- Develop a greater understanding within communities of the role and work of the community committee including projects funded through the Wellbeing Fund and Youth Activities fund.
- Increase awareness and understanding within communities of the role and services offered by the Area Support Team, Leeds City Council and partners
- An alternative way of communicating decision making in a transparent and user friendly way.
- An alternative way of consulting with communities which will help to reach a different, younger audience.
- Provide a new means of communicating with the Parish and Town Councils

## **2.9 How can the Facebook Page be used?**

2.10 Other Community Committees across the city use the pages for:

- Advertising committee meetings
- Promoting local community events such as fairs, galas and fun days
- Promoting community meetings
- Showing how community organisations and projects are being supported by the Community Committee
- Sharing and liking local groups and information
- Sharing and liking other council services including the corporate page.

2.11 The pages are doing well with increasing number of followers on a weekly basis and have received no negative responses. There have been some issues raised for example around venues or the timing of meetings however these have been addressed. There has also been comment and debate on the Leeds cycle super-highway.

2.12 Examples of the type of posts and interaction by other community committees are attached as an appendix.

## **2.13 Outer North East Facebook Page**

2.14 The page can be used to promote the business of the Community Committee. Use of photographs and videos help to build the profile of the Committee by showing how the Committee is providing support to the communities in Outer North East Leeds.

2.15 Currently information about funding opportunities, volunteering, training and events is shared via email to an Outer North East mailing list. This information can also be posted onto the Facebook Page to create a current noticeboard of useful and relevant information for anyone with an interest in the area.

2.16 Many of the parishes, including Wetherby Town Council already have Facebook pages promoting the parish council, of neighbourhood planning, local village halls, and in Wetherby's case, 'Welcome to Wetherby' which provides all you need to know about Wetherby and this historic market town and currently has 1350 'likes'. The page Outer North East Facebook page offers the potential for a new way to interact with the parish and town councils through these existing Facebook pages, and develop a network of communication across the Outer North East of Leeds.

### **2.17 How the Facebook pages are managed**

2.18 The Facebook pages are owned by the Community Committee and are serviced by the Area Support Team. Members will not have individual Facebook profiles as part of the Community Committee. The East North East team already service the Facebook pages for Inner East and Inner North East.

2.19 The Area Support Team is responsible for:

- Checking pages at least once a day;
- Being polite, open and respectful
- Directing all service enquiries to the relevant service areas within the Council for them to respond to.
- Responding to questions or comments in a timely and informative manner.
- Ensuring information posted is consistent with other communications
- Not entering into unnecessary debates
- Only sharing information which is available publicly.
- Where appropriate, responding to information requested via Facebook by email or telephone.

## **3.0 Recommendations**

3.1 Outer North East Community Committee are asked to consider and comment on the use of Facebook to connect and share information with a wider audience and develop a new communication network for Outer North East Leeds.

## Examples of posts by the other Community Committees

### Outer North West – Community Committee conversation about social isolation

This screenshot shows a Facebook post from the 'Leeds City Council Outer North West Community Committee' page, dated 'Yesterday'. The post text reads: 'Passionate opinions and heartbreaking stories of isolation being shared with local councillors Latty, Flynn, Wadsworth, and Pat and Graham Latty.' Below the text are two photographs: the top one shows a group of people in a meeting room, and the bottom one shows a larger group of people seated around a long table. The post has received several likes from 'Otley R.U.F.C.', 'Otley Town Football Club', and 'North Leeds Life Magazines'. The page's left sidebar shows 'POSTS TO PAGE' with a 'Write Post' button and 'LIKED BY THIS PAGE' with the mentioned entities. The bottom of the screenshot shows a Windows taskbar with various application icons and a system tray.

### Inner South – Posted live at their community committee event

This screenshot shows a Facebook post from the 'Leeds City Council Inner South Community Committee' page, posted by Martin Dean on 3 September. The post text says: 'Delighted with engagement at the Inner South Community Committee this evening looking closely at the issues of Domestic Violence, and its impact in our area. Thanks to everyone who contributed. We will review all the thoughts and report back on local actions, and recommendations to the city wide strategy'. Below the text is a photograph of a man presenting to a group of people at a community event. The post has reached 99 people. The page's left sidebar shows 'Page' information, 'Activity' with recent posts from Suzy Grace and Ian Kenning, and 'LIKED BY THIS PAGE' including 'Leeds City Council', 'Leeds11.com', and 'Beeston Hill Pharmacy'. The right sidebar shows 'THIS WEEK' statistics and an advertisement for 'THE point'. The bottom of the screenshot shows a Windows taskbar with application icons and a system tray.

## Inner North East posted details of youth activities fund

Leeds City Council Inner North East Community Committee

Monday, 8 October 2014 at 19:00  
Hosted by Leeds City Council Inner North East Community Committee

**Inner North East Community Committee Funded Meanwood Olympics**  
(17 photos)  
The Inner North East Community funded Zest Health for Life to undertake Meanwood Olympics in the summer holiday, over 200 children and young people attended.

Leeds City Council Inner North East Community Committee  
17 September

Leeds Federated Housing are recruiting for a Community Development

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Facebook © 2014

09:11  
23/09/2014

## Outer East posted information responding to issues raised by local residents.

Leeds City Council Outer East Community Committee

Apprentice Baker  
www.stanks.ods.co.uk  
Leeds ATA

**You said, we did...**  
Residents of Laurel Terrace in Stanks (in the Cross Gates & Whinmoor ward) complained to their local councillors about several issues in their locality such as large vehicle access (Fire engines, wheelie bin wagons), over... See More

Leeds City Council Outer East Community Committee likes this.

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09:13  
23/09/2014