

Agenda Item No: 6

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny (Services)

Date of Meeting: 3rd June 2013

Report Title: Overview of the Council's Twitter Service

Report By: Kevin Boorman
Head of Marketing and Communications

Purpose of Report

To provide a description of current arrangements for the Council's twitter accounts.

Recommendation(s)

1. To note the report.

Reasons for Recommendations

There are no specific recommendations, this report is to update members on the current position of our Twitter accounts

Twitter at Hastings Borough Council

1 Alongside many other social network and blogging accounts, Hastings Borough Council maintains several Twitter accounts.

2 The most significant are the main corporate account @hastingsbc (2346 followers at the time of writing) and the tourism account @visit1066 (2814 followers at the time of writing). Both accounts were recently used to drive traffic to our Facebook page for the City of Culture bid, helping achieve 884 likes and placing us as the second most popular bid on Facebook (behind Plymouth). Alongside our partners who run the @rotherdc account, we will continue to tweet positive news about the bid using the hashtag 1066cityofculture.

@hastingsbc

3 @hastingsbc is maintained from 0900 until 1700 every weekday by our Communications Officer and Marketing Manager.

4 Typically, this accounts for less than twenty minutes of their time during the day but this can vary according to the situation.

5 There are between ten to twenty incoming tweets in any given week but not all require a response. Any incoming tweet that relates to a 'customer service' issue is directed to the Contact Centre or the relevant officer. Where a tweeter complains, they are encouraged to follow the formal complaints procedure outlined here:
http://www.hastings.gov.uk/decisions_democracy/transparency/making_complaint/.

6 The long term plan is for the contact centre to have access to the account so they can deal with these enquiries directly. However, it should be noted that hundreds of customer service enquiries come into the Council every week through www.hastings.gov.uk so this is a far more significant communications channel. At present, these enquiries are routed around the Council but work is underway to centralise them so they go directly into the Contact Centre.

7 @hastingsbc is used out-of-hours by our on-call Communications Officer where appropriate, most recently during severe weather and other emergencies. It is also used to direct followers' attention to new content on www.hastings.gov.uk and www.famouslyhastings.com, or to promote local initiatives and events.

@visit1066

8 @visit1066 is maintained from 9am until 5pm, every weekday by our Tourism Manager. Typically, this accounts for half an hour of their day although, again, this can vary according to the time of year.

9 The account is primarily used to promote tourism events and attractions, with many tweets consisting of links back to content on our tourism website www.visit1066country.com. The account is also useful for re-tweeting praise about 1066 Country and engaging with journalists.

Other Hastings Borough Council Twitter Accounts

10 Our Communications and Marketing team regularly receives requests from officers who want to create a dedicated twitter account for their activities.

11 For the most part, these requests are declined because it is felt that the majority of the tweets can be covered via the main two accounts. However, there is a small number of standalone accounts that are maintained by officers in other departments. Our Communications and Marketing team keeps the login details so they can be closed if they are not adequately (or appropriately) administered.

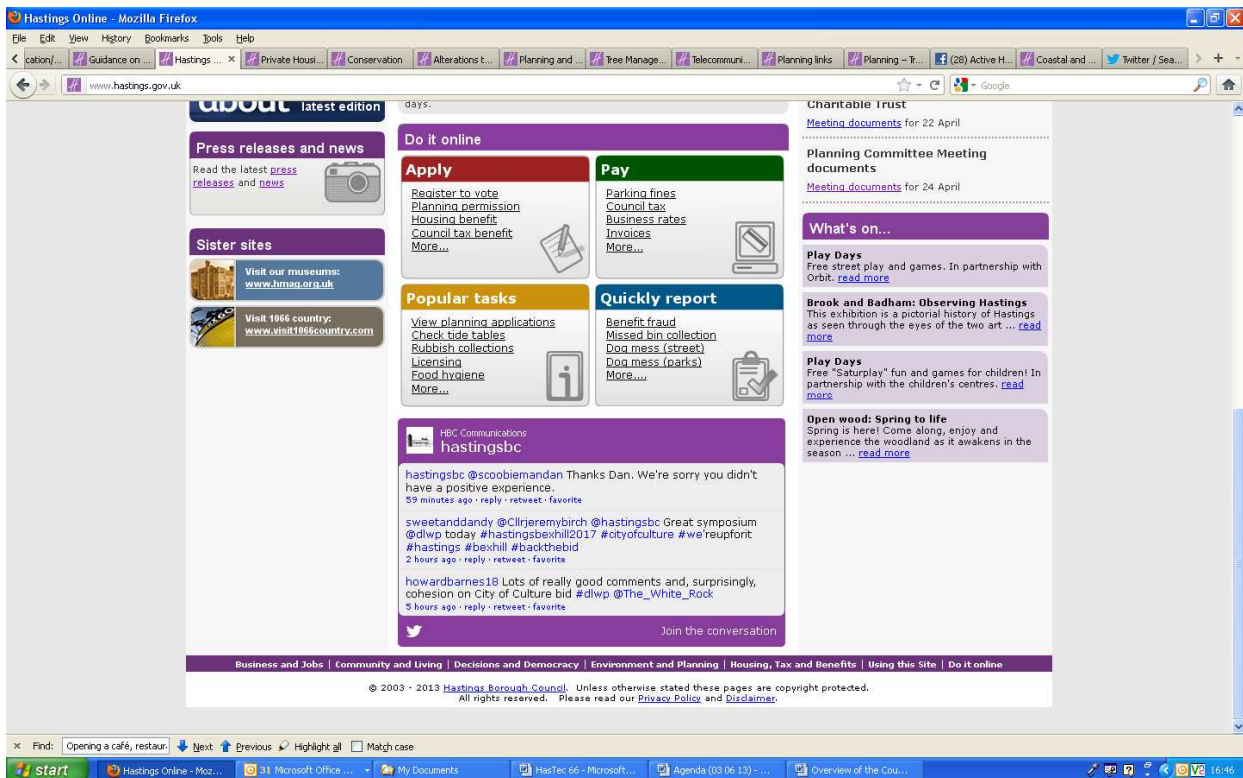
12 The most significant of these accounts are:

- @ShapingHastings (616 followers). This is maintained by our Planning Policy team and, alongside their Facebook presence, has proved to be a useful additional channel for engaging with residents during consultation periods.
- @stadesaturdays (368 followers). This is maintained by our Sector Development Officer on behalf of the Regeneration team. It is mainly active during the lifespan of the Stade Saturdays programme.
- @biz_hastings (169 followers). This is maintained by our Sector Development Officer and our Economic Development and Inclusion Manager. It is designed to provide business information, intelligence and news to local partners.
- @activehastings (136 followers). This is maintained by our Leisure Development Administrative Officer. Although it is not as successful as their Facebook presence (1.998 friends!), we are exploring ways of boosting follower numbers so it becomes a more valuable promotional channel for them.

Integrated uses of Twitter at Hastings Borough Council

www.hastings.gov.uk

13 We have included a Twitter 'widget' on the front of www.hastings.gov.uk:

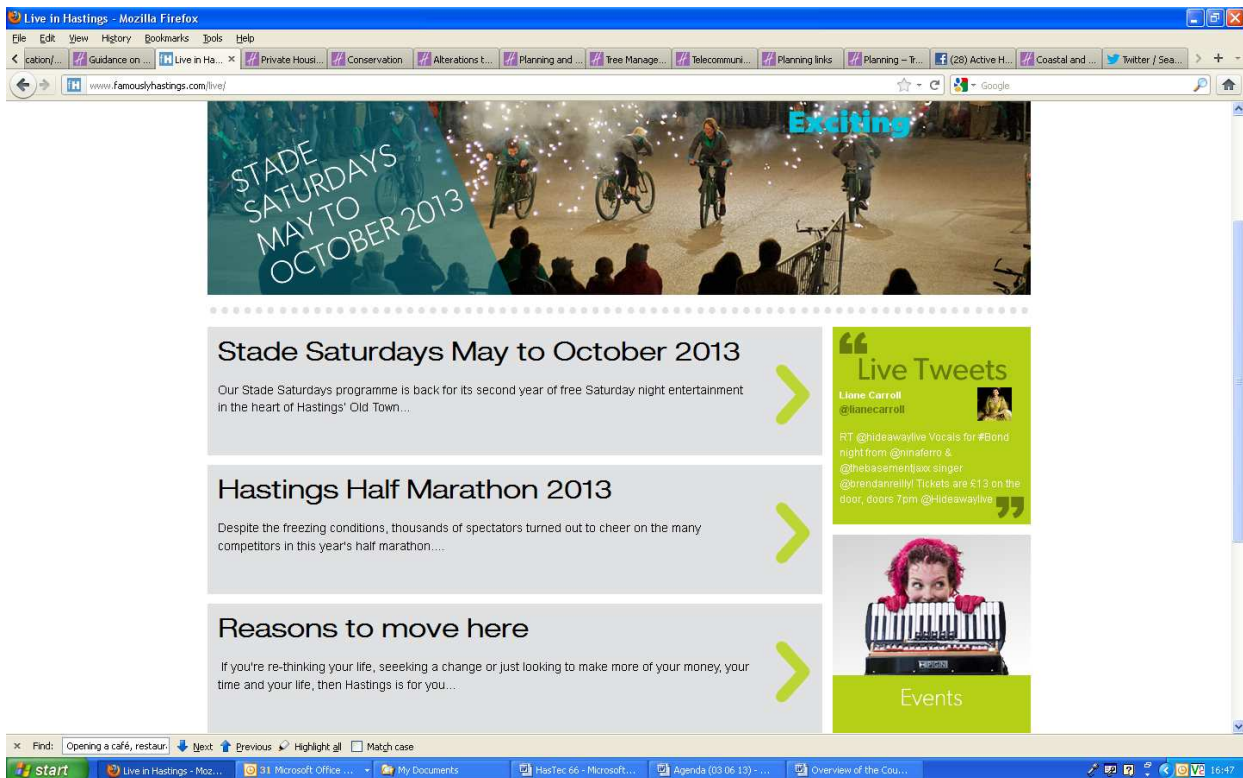


13 However, it is currently sited 'below the fold' (i.e. on the lower part of the page, requiring viewers to scroll down) which means that visitors quite often fail to see it.

14 In the forthcoming re-design of www.hastings.gov.uk, we intend to position this widget far more prominently and will be using twitter as a means of powering 'latest news' on the front page.

www.famouslyhastings.com

15 We have also linked 50 'trusted' community twitter accounts to www.famouslyhastings.com so their tweets appear across the site (tagged to the four main categories of the site: visit/invest/live/study). This has helped to make the site (and the Famously Hastings brand) feel like it is part of and belongs to the community:



Wards Affected

Ashdown, Baird, Braybrooke, Castle, Central St. Leonards, Conquest, Gensing, Hollington, Maze Hill, Old Hastings, Ore, Silverhill, St. Helens, Tressell, West St. Leonards, Wishing Tree

Area(s) Affected

Central Hastings, East Hastings, North St. Leonards, South St. Leonards

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Yes
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	No
Risk Management	Yes
Environmental Issues	Yes
Economic/Financial Implications	Yes
Human Rights Act	No
Organisational Consequences	Yes
Local People's Views	Yes

Background Information

Officer to Contact

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