

This report will be made
Public on 24 June 2022

Hythe Town Council

www.Hythe-tc.gov.uk

Report number **F&GP/07/22**

To Hythe Town Council
Date 21 June 2022
Status **Non-Exempt**
Responsible officer **Town Clerk**

Subject **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT F&GP/07/22**

SUMMARY: This report provides a recommendation to add a community engagement software application to the Council's website to increase engagement and support Hythe's Strategic Plan. It recommends that the Committee reviews in accordance with good practice.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee is asked to agree the recommendations set out below because; -

- a) The Council is committed to control and manage its financial affairs in accordance with The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) guidelines.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note the report F&GP/07/22.
2. To approve the addition of a community engagement software application to the council's website.
3. To vire £1,995 from IT Reserves to set up the software.

INTRODUCTION

The Council's website providers Aubergine have developed a software application that residents can download on their mobile phones (for both iOS & Android).

The app displays the areas of the website you want to appear there – Council officers have the same admin area on the website (just that more functions are added to the system), and the council can choose which content gets shown on the app.



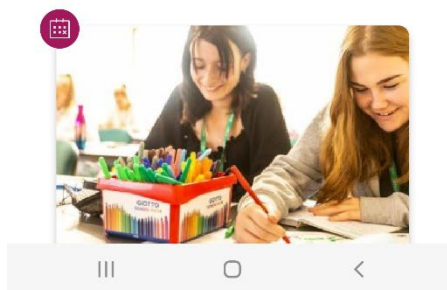
Wellingborough Town Council

Serving the people of Wellingborough

This app includes news, events and information about Wellingborough, and you can choose to be notified via the app with updates (ensure notifications are turned on via the Settings page, accessed via the app's navigation).

If you can't find the information you require then please [contact us \(via our website\)](#).

Upcoming Events



The extra features are that users get push notifications for things like news and events when staff add new things to the website or app. This means that users can choose to be notified via the app with updates in real time.

An example of this, is when a boot fair is cancelled.

HTC officers will be able to update the news on social media and it will automatically send the update out to residents or users that have downloaded the app. Giving real time information to users.

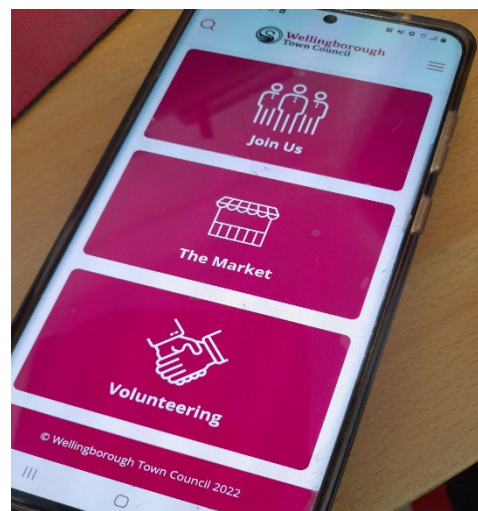
Other items such as a Business Directory with local business names and links to their websites can be added. Which would benefit the businesses in Hythe.

It is a good engagement tool as it pushes stuff to people rather than waiting for them to come to you!

As an example, Wellingborough Town Council have already added the app and if you go and head into the app store on your mobile phone (either Apple Store or Google Play) and search 'Wellingborough Town Council' – download it to see how the app works. You don't need to register or anything like that.

By introducing this app, it will improve online visibility and Hythe Town Council's presence which in turn will boost the council's engagement with the community.

A copy with information from the council's website flyer is attached (Appendix attached).



You get to choose up to 10 different sections of your website to get pushed out as the app – and you can chop and change, too.

Cost – initial, one-off build is £1995 + VAT

Annual service & support fees are £400 + VAT

There is also a potential annual fee of £70 for your Apple App Store licence that the council will need to have as a publisher. Other councils have managed to not pay this as Apple view councils as Government, but it has been highlighted as this is a potential annual cost although advised as unlikely. At the Finance and General Purposes meeting on 26 May it was recommended to council that £5k be vired into

IT reserves. These minutes have since been ratified at the Council meeting 23 June 2022. Therefore, there are funds available to cover an IT cost such as this.

SUMMARY

The community engagement application would provide a higher standard of service to the council's residents and would keep users of the app informed of events, news, road closures, boot fair cancellations, all in real time.

Residents can download the app and never have to worry about missing a notice of meeting or event again.

This app would improve the council's engagement with the community and head towards supporting Hythe's Strategic Plan, which is currently under consultation on the Council's website. It will also count as part of the proof required for the Local Council Award Scheme.

RISK MANAGEMENT

A summary of the perceived risk follows.

Perceived Risk Council does not add the community engagement software application to the council's website and staff must continue to manually publish events and engagements.

Risk Low

Likelihood Low

Preventative Action To add the application to the council's website so that residents are automatically updated with the council's activities.

CONTACT OFFICER

If you have any queries about this report, please contact The Town Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer of the Council.

Tel: 01303 266152 or email clerk@hythe-tc.gov.uk prior to the meeting.