

Ratho & District Community Council Engagement Officer's Report for year ending March 2021

As reported last year the post of Engagement Officer is combined with that of Secretary making a single point of contact for our residents.

As also highlighted previously, Ratho & District Community Council comprises a large area with numerous settlements. There are 7 different Facebook pages and groups set up by residents in different areas and we post items on these as appropriate, rather than having our own Facebook page or group.

Our former Internet Service Provider (ISP) ceased trading at the end of December 2020 so we migrated the website to a new ISP and took the opportunity to change the look of the website and refresh a number of the pages. Our email addresses also migrated at that time with no interruption of service. Links to all Community Council email addresses are on the home page.

Our Twitter account is not particularly well-used by residents, and the limitations on the size of posts does not provide sufficient space for the many CEC publications and information bulletins we receive. However, small topical items are posted there (eg emergency road closures) as well as relevant retweets from the City Council or other statutory bodies. While we occasionally use Twitter to contact particular council accounts seeking information on behalf of residents (eg Edinburgh Travel, Planning Service) limitations on the size of messages usually means using email instead.

In addition, we provide email updates to residents who prefer to receive these via a Google Group (which is GDPR compliant). These items are duplication of updates on Facebook as we understand that not everyone wishes to use social media.

For the year to March 2021 there were

- ▲ 183 Posts on Facebook
- ▲ 145 Twitter Tweets and Retweets
- ▲ 62 Emails to residents on our mailing list, covering items of relevance to our area.

The website, from Google Analytics, would appear to be used principally for accessing Community Council minutes which are also posted after approval on our noticeboard in Ratho Village.

Unfortunately, because of restrictions we have been unable to hold or attend public meetings (for example on planning issues) to meet residents and hear their views on the topics under discussion, and at which we would normally provide advice or comment where appropriate so are now having to consider surveys which are flexible enough to include people who do not use social media or, indeed, the internet. Due to the wide area and diverse communities covered by the Community Council, this is providing logistical problems for distribution.

Our monthly Community Council meetings are mounted on Microsoft Teams and residents are welcome to attend, though in practice very few do so, except when there is a particularly high-profile agenda item – for example the update on Dalmahoy Junction.

Going forward, the most important part of the job will continue to be to listen to our residents to find out their problems and ideas and liaise with City Council officials and Councillors to seek early resolutions.

Kate Watt
May 2021