Strategic HR Forum Discussion Topic – March 2013

> From Housing and Litter to Facebook and Twitter – How Social Media has moved on and what role it plays in council business.

Read the full article on line @

http://www.google.co.uk/search?q=from+housing+and+litter+to+facebook+and+twitter&rls=com.microsoft:en-gb:IE-SearchBox&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&sourceid=ie7&safe=active&redir_esc=&ei=X4E0Uc-PJMmL0AWWq4DYDg

"We are living through an unprecedented time of budget cuts for local government and are only at the beginning. At the same time we are facing a digital revolution that is changing the way that people communicate, socialise, share information, work and even access goods and services."

Sound bites

- The average age of Computer users in the UK is 36

- There are 48 million adults in the UK each with a vote

- 18% of pensioners are now signed up to one social networking site

- 32% of adults use the internet to obtain information from public authorities

- The LGA report into the part that Social Media played in the last General Election revealed that more than ever, the public expect their elected representatives to interact with them through Social Media.

What is Social Media?

Social media is a difficult concept to define. it encompasses a broad range of tools, networks and mediums with which people use to communicate in a variety of different ways and formats. These include:

- Social networking sites where individuals create profiles such as Facebook, Google+ Bebo and MySpace.
- Blogging or microblogging sites where individuals write articles or short posts such as Twitter, blogspot and Tumblr
- Photo and video sharing sites where users upload visual content such as Flickr and Youtube.

In the era of advanced technology, social media has increasingly become an integral aspect of communicating to the wider world and spreading messages. Tools such as Facebook and Twitter and techniques such as tweeting and blogging are becoming a part of every day communications.

How can social media support efficiency?

A significant number of council residents are happy to use web, mobile and other low-cost technologies including social media for most of the things they do on a day to day basis. By enabling residents to access council services via these channels more easily, councils can drastically reduce the cost of customer services whilst offering residents a more convenient time and place to contact them. Better communications? Social media offers the opportunity for more meaningful dialogue and engagement with customers. It can offer a more open and transparent relationship to emerge between customers and councils and offers new ways of involving residents in consultation processes.

NHDC's Social Media presence

The Council currently has **Twitter** and **Flickr** accounts. The Museums Service also has a **Facebook** page. It is probable in the future that NHDC's social media presence will expand e.g. we may have a corporate Facebook / Youtube page, however this currently has to be balanced against the resource implications of managing a bigger online presence.

A couple examples of our recent use of Twitter:

- Tweeting any expected disruption to waste services in severe weather

- Tweeting apprentice job adverts were on the council website.

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The council has a Social Media Policy, this document is an introduction to 'social media', what it does and how it is currently used by the Council. It also lays out some general guidelines for staff on how to make use of social media for Council purposes, and what they need to know before doing so. It can be found on the councils intranet page.

It includes:-

- What is Social Media
- What are the advantages of Social Media
- NHDC's Social Media presence
- General Protocols for Social Media use
- Making a business case for using social media in your service area
- Social Media for personal use

Future plans
- Monitoring and reporting arrangements
- Active contact channel: service interruptions and other high volume/short term events
- Service specific channels
- Business continuity/emergency response

North Herts Special @**NthHertsSpecial**

Spent half an hour chasing a very large cow called Nancy around #**Hitchin** There are a possible other two on the loose... Photos to follow!

■ Nancy the cow makes her way around the grounds of Hitchin Hospital

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From Stuart Gwinnett

Udderly great escape gets police moo-ving

WHEN police received a call to reports of a cow wandering the streets of late-night Hitchin at the weekend, they could have been forgiven for thinking it was a hoax.

But what sounded like an udder joke turned out to be true, and officers ended up on a cat and cow chase to get the elusive bovine back home.

Residents in and around Westbury Close who thought they were hearing things when the sound of mooing drifted through their windows on Saturday night, soon realised their ears were not deceiving them, and looked on as efforts were made to moo-ve the cow on.

Special sergeant Megan Cope, who ended up chasing Nancy the cow around the estate with a colleague, said: "A member of the public was reporting a large cow with big horns on the loose. We arrived and did indeed find a very large cow roaming around the housing estate!

"After about half-an-hour of running around chasing Nancy, we managed to contain her in the grounds of the now disused Hitchin Hospital and finally managed to make contact with the correct farmer to come and pick her up."

It turned out Nancy had escaped from the Oughtonhead Nature Reserve, milking her escape by taking a tour of Talbot Street, Oughton Green and Oughtonhead Way on her travels.

But before she could sample what else the town had to offer, staff from Maydencroft Farm were called, and a trailer was brought to the hospital.

"The farmer informed us Nancy is one of three English Longhorn cows and had escaped from a field in Hitchin," added Sgt Cope. "Nancy was returned safely to her field to join the other two."

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Hitchi

Some other useful articles:

http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/media-releases/-/journal_content/56/10171/3729826/NEWS-TEMPLATE

http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/fire-and-rescue-services/-/journal_content/56/10171/3794669/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE