

Communications plan v1.01

ORGANISATION MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL	PROJECT COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT	DOCUMENT COMMUNICATIONS PLAN
DATE 18.06.26	VERSION 1.01	PREPARED BY DOMINIC RUTTERFORD COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING OFFICER



Melksham
TOWN COUNCIL

1 Purpose

To build awareness, recruit support, and maintain momentum for the delivery of a community-led, accessible allotment space, while establishing a sustainable initiative that provides ongoing visible benefit to the town.

The project has been agreed in principle, with funding allocated and delivery progressing through a Task & Finish Group.

2 Objectives

- ⇒ **Awareness** – promote the project clearly across the town
- ⇒ **Participation** – recruit volunteers, sponsors, and contributors
- ⇒ **Engagement** – foster community ownership and involvement
- ⇒ **Momentum** – maintain visibility throughout delivery
- ⇒ **Legacy** – demonstrate ongoing community benefit

3 Key messages

- ⇒ a community allotment for everyone to access and enjoy
- ⇒ designed to be inclusive and accessible
- ⇒ a project built with and by the community
- ⇒ opportunities to get involved now
- ⇒ grown by the community, shared with the community

4 Target audiences

- ⇒ Residents
- ⇒ Volunteers and community groups
- ⇒ Families and young people
- ⇒ Local businesses (sponsorship/support)
- ⇒ Existing allotment holders

5 **Approach/phases** (cont)

⇒ **Phase 1 – awareness (announcement)**

- ⇒ Press release to Melksham Independent News (MIN)
- ⇒ Launch dedicated webpage under “Venues and Facilities” (central information hub)
- ⇒ Create a Community Allotment Facebook (CAF) group or page (exactly which depends on risk)
- ⇒ Promote via on CAF page or group and share to MTC Facebook

5 Approach/phases (cont)

⇒ Phase 2 – Recruitment and support

⇒ Campaigns for:

⇒ Volunteers

⇒ Tool/material donations

⇒ Engaging local businesses by offering

⇒ Recognition on signage and materials

⇒ Social media mentions

⇒ Inclusion in press coverage

⇒ Follow-up MIN story focused on involvement

5 **Approach/phases** (cont)

⇒ **Phase 2 – Recruitment and support** (cont)

⇒ Campaigns for:

⇒ Volunteers

⇒ Tool/material donations

⇒ Business sponsorship

⇒ Follow-up MIN story focused on involvement

5 **Approach/phases** (cont)

⇒ **Phase 3 – Community engagement**

⇒ Promote:

⇒ Competitions (e.g. garden or scarecrow design)

⇒ Family and school involvement

⇒ Event engagement (e.g. QR code at festivals)

⇒ Use MIN for feature-led stories (people-focused)

5 Approach/phases (cont)

⇒ **Phase 4 – Progress and storytelling**

⇒ Regular updates via:

⇒ Facebook (primary)

⇒ Website updates

⇒ Content:

⇒ Photos and milestones

⇒ Volunteer recognition

⇒ Behind-the-scenes progress

⇒ Invite MIN for site visit/progress coverage

5 Approach/phases (cont)

⇒ Phase 5 – Launch and activation

- ⇒ Press release + MIN coverage of opening
- ⇒ Promote visits and participation
- ⇒ Continue engagement through Facebook and website

5 **Approach/phases** (cont)

⇒ **Phase 6 – Ongoing community distribution and legacy**

- ⇒ To sustain long-term engagement, the Council could explore community distribution points across the town where produce and plants can be shared.
- ⇒ This may include:
 - ⇒ “Help yourself” produce/plant/seed stations around Town.
 - ⇒ Optional donation model
 - ⇒ Clear signage linking to the project

5 **Approach/phases** (cont)

⇒ **Phase 6 – Ongoing community distribution and legacy** (cont)

⇒ This approach will:

⇒ Provide a visible town-wide presence

⇒ Reinforce community benefit

⇒ Support ongoing communications and storytelling

⇒ Encourage continued participation

6 Channels

- ⇒ Melksham Independent News (priority external partner)
- ⇒ Web page on MTC website – central information hub
- ⇒ Facebook:
 - ⇒ Main page (reach)
 - ⇒ Dedicated group/page (engagement)
- ⇒ Community events and on-site signage

7 Risks and migration

- ⇒ Low awareness beyond social media
 - ⇒ Early and ongoing engagement with MIN
- ⇒ Low community engagement
 - ⇒ Clear calls to action and dedicated Facebook space
- ⇒ Fragmented information
 - ⇒ Single webpage as source of truth
- ⇒ Loss of momentum post-launch
 - ⇒ Ongoing activity and distribution points

8 Alignment with Town Plan

- ⇒ C1.04 / C1.07 – Community engagement and use of spaces
- ⇒ C1.11 / C1.12 – Partnership working and community connection
- ⇒ C1.05 – Health and wellbeing

9 Resource implications

Officer time for:

- ⇒ Webpage creation and updates
- ⇒ Social media management
- ⇒ Media liaison with MIN

No additional budget required at this stage

10 Campaign alignment and cross-promotion

Communications will align with relevant national campaigns and awareness days to maximise reach and provide consistent content themes.

Key opportunities include:

- ⇒ National Allotments Week (August): Open day and awareness campaign
- ⇒ Volunteers' Week (June): Volunteer recruitment and recognition
- ⇒ Great Big Green Week (June): Sustainability and environmental focus

10 Campaign alignment and cross-promotion (cont)

- ⇒ Love Parks Week (July): Link to wellbeing and green spaces
- ⇒ Harvest Festival (September/October): Showcase produce and outcomes
- ⇒ National Gardening Week / Earth Day / World Environment Day: Entry-level engagement and themed content
- ⇒ Corporate Volunteer Days: Engage local businesses in volunteering

10 Campaign alignment and cross-promotion (cont)

This will:

- ⇒ Support regular, themed content
- ⇒ Provide timely opportunities for MIN coverage
- ⇒ Align the project with wider national conversations

11 Ambition

There is an opportunity to position the Community Allotment as a regionally significant project by making accessibility its unique selling point (USP).

This would involve adopting an accessibility-first design approach, ensuring the space is inclusive and usable for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. By prioritising accessibility, the project naturally supports wider community engagement, participation and wellbeing.

11 **Ambition** (cont)

A clearly defined accessibility focus would:

- ⇒ Differentiate the project from more traditional allotments
- ⇒ Demonstrate leadership in inclusive design and community provision
- ⇒ Broaden its relevance beyond Melksham

11 **Ambition** (cont)

This creates an opportunity to secure wider media coverage, including regional outlets such as:

- ⇒ BBC Radio Wiltshire
- ⇒ BBC Points West
- ⇒ Wiltshire Times

By developing a strong and distinctive narrative around accessibility and inclusion, the project can move beyond a local initiative and become a recognised example of best practice.