

Members Interest
N/A

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archive Committee 26 March 2015

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service: Digital Engagement Strategy Update and Case Study

Recommendation(s)

1a. That the update on the Digital Engagement Strategy for Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service is received.

1b. That the new performance measures are approved.

Report of Director for Place and Deputy Chief Executive (Staffordshire County Council) and Director of People – Assistant Chief Executive (Stoke on Trent City Council)

Reasons for Recommendations

2. A Digital Engagement Strategy was introduced in November 2015 to set a framework for the Service and its use of social media and digital communication. This report is updating the Committee on progress.

Background

3. Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service has started to implement its Digital Engagement Strategy to ensure that new and existing channels of communication are used together and effectively to reach new audiences.

4. The Strategy assesses the growth of social media and its impact and also summarises current digital engagement and channels:

- Main website
- Staffordshire Past Track
- Online catalogue
- Staffordshire Name Indexes
- Find My Past
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Mailing lists

The current channels have been retained but with a clear focus on their purpose and how they can be used to engage effectively.

5. New objectives were set for using these channels, implementing new ones, and setting up a team to own the Strategy and deliver it. They include:

- Using the main website for service information and updates.

- Transferring Staffordshire Past Track to a new platform to continue delivering access to collections and enable greater user interaction with them.
- Continue to use a mix of professional and volunteer skills to add content to the Online Catalogue.
- Market the Staffordshire Name Indexes website to the family history community and consider further development to maximise income.
- Promote Find My Past to the local family history community and ensure library staff are familiar with the new resource.
- Use Facebook, Twitter and blogging to promote other channels and collections in an informal, engaging, conversational manner.
- Establish a team to implement the strategy and set up performance measures to check its effectiveness.
- Work within the guidelines of the two parent authorities.

6. Since the Strategy was approved in November 2014 the Service has begun to embed social media and digital channels as a means of communicating with new audiences.

7. The Service has also assessed a variety of methods to measure the effectiveness of social media. There is no national or local standard recommended and it is difficult to benchmark against existing users of social media as most do not publish past statistics. However after assessing a number of methods the Service has decided to measure for Facebook:

- Likes
- Reach
- Engagement

For Twitter:

- Followers
- Impressions
- Engagements
- Engagement rate

Appendix 2 to this report explains the measures and what they record.

Case Study – Christmas Truce goes global

8. The Archive Service has been investigating its collections for material on the Great War to support the commemorations in the county and city. Volunteers have assisted with this work and one of them came across a letter written by Major General Congreve on the magical date of 25 December 1914. Not only that, the letter actually described the events of the Christmas Truce and it was sent from a high ranking officer.

9. The Archive Service knew that this letter had the potential to be a very exciting story and one that would really raise the profile of the Service and its collections. Early on in the autumn of 2014 staff from the Service worked with

the County Council Communications Team to develop a package and launch event that would be attractive the media. This included:

- Research carried out to confirm the importance and authenticity of the letter.
- Acquisition of images from the Imperial War Museum to provide visual appeal.
- Producing an audio visual presentation of the letter read out by the Staffordshire Poet Laureate.
- Organising the launch on 4 December at the National Memorial Arboretum complete with a costumed interpreter.
- Liaising with the owner of the letter to seek permission for it to be publicised and taken to the Arboretum.
- Preparing the letter for display and providing copies for the media.

10. The launch at the National Memorial Arboretum was hugely successful with strong interest from the media. During the press event pre-prepared tweets and Facebook posts were submitted through the Archive and Heritage, Staffordshire Great War and Staffordshire County Council feeds. The Staffordshire Great War website was the host site for the video and copies of the original document.

11. The statistics for Archives and Heritage social media for the Christmas Truce story reveal:

Twitter	Impressions	Engagements
	7,884	162
Facebook	Reach	Likes/shares
	1,519	112

(as at 23 December 2014)

For the County Council social media they reveal:

Twitter	Impressions	Engagements
	9302	165
Facebook	Impressions	Engagements
	522	8

(as at 23 December 2014)

The Great War website pages are not individually analysed but visitor sessions on 4 and 5 December more than doubled from an average of 22 to 67 sessions to 181 on 4 Dec and 138 on 5 Dec.

12. The story was also published by at least seven different media outlets including Sky News and Australian ABC News. This led to the item being picked up by the Vicar of Stowe by Chartley parish which has a memorial to Congreve inside the church. The Archive Service reproduced the display it

used at Staffordshire Record Office and lent it to the church in time for Christmas Eve. The letter was the focus of the vicar's Christmas message.

It shows how our Digital Engagement Strategy has delivered wide online engagement but also reached a new physical audience on Christmas Day in church.

Appendix 1

Equalities implications:

The Strategy will help the Service to reach a wider range of audiences than it does currently.

Legal implications:

Staff have been given training and guidelines to ensure communications do not harm the reputation of either authority.

Resource and Value for money implications:

The Strategy supports promotion of two sites to generate income.

Risk implications:

No significant implications.

Climate Change implications:

No significant implications.

Health Impact Assessment screening:

No significant implications.

Report author:

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List of Background Papers

Papers	Contact/Directorate/ext number
Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive	
Service: Digital Engagement Strategy	
Social media statistics	