



10 Parishes Centre

2. Communications

Somerset  
Rural  
Renaissance



# 10 Parishes Centre Steering Group

## Communications Strategy

### Introduction

The 10 Parishes Centre Steering Group was established to oversee the project development phase of the 10 Parishes Centre project on behalf of the Wiveliscombe Area Partnership and others so as to ensure the project develops largely in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of the local community and meets both local and wider objectives.

The need to communicate with stakeholders, external and internal, and local and regional, to generate interest is central to the development and implementation of a successful community-based 10 Parishes Centre project.

### Aims

The aims of the Communications Strategy are to achieve:-

- Better communication, leading to better performance
- Improved information flow
- Better information and communication channels to enable community participation
- Increased awareness and understanding of the project and its potential

### Principles

Our Communications Strategy is based on four key principles:-

The right information  
To the right people  
In the right medium  
At the right time

These principles include a number of key factors:

- communication must be meaningful and appropriate
- Information must be accessible
- Quality mediums and methods must be used
- Communication channels must allow information to, through and across all levels
- Information must be relevant and in plain English
- Consideration needs to be given to the needs of people with disabilities and those who's first language is not English
- The process of project development and delivery must be transparent

### Target Audiences

We want to reach everyone with a stake in the future of the 10 parishes area including people living, working or doing business here, those who deliver services to the local communities and people who have influence over the future of the area. We want build on the work of the "Building Links"<sup>1</sup> project and continue the dialogue with communities based on where they live and people in communities based on common interests. We want to communicate and listen to people who others have traditionally found hard to reach and hard to hear.

Local people	Voluntary sector
Local groups	The elderly
Local businesses	Young people
Elected representatives	People with disabilities
Parish councils	Schools
Local authorities	Opinion formers
Government agencies	

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<sup>1</sup> Building Links – Somerset Rural Renaissance Programme funded consultation, Winter 2007

## Messages

It is important that all our communications have as much impact as possible. To avoid dilution of the message or contradiction, the following will be the main messages that we will attempt to relay in our communications:

- The 10 Parishes Centre represents a once in a generation opportunity
- We want to hear your opinion
- We intend to create an important community hub to serve the needs of everybody who lives or works in the 10 parishes area
- We need the help of the community and partners.

The messages should be:

Short and to the point  
Not conflicting  
In plain English  
Focussing on involvement

## Tools and Activities

We shall use a variety of methods based on what reaches people most effectively and has most credibility. These include:

10radio	leaflets	posters
consultation events	letters	press releases
e-mail newsletter	minutes of meetings	website
exhibition	networking	brochure

We shall strive to ensure that our communications leave no one out and we minimise exclusion and marginalisation in the development process and beyond. The messages will be relayed using different methods for different groups and a communications matrix has been developed as an integral part of our communications strategy.

## Resources

We shall make best use of the resources we have and strive to increase resources commensurate with the task. Our current resources, those that we have access to and can be applied to the task, are:

Wiveliscombe House	Community notice boards	Wiveliscombe Messenger
Steering Group members	Community networks	Wiveliscombe.com
Local councillors		Parish newsletters

## Timescales

This is the first Communications Strategy for the 10 Parishes Centre. The Action Plan included with it, has been designed with the next six months in mind. As the project's development progresses and capital funding is secured, there will be a need for a review of the Strategy to ensure it is fit for purpose. We believe that the Communications Action Plan should be agreed every six months and the Strategy that underpins it reviewed on an annual basis.

## Evaluation and Amendment

In the Spring of 2008, therefore, the Steering Group will carry out a communications audit to assess the effectiveness of the strategy with both "internal" and "external" audiences. We shall seek the funds to allow us to engage someone independent to do the assessment. We shall consider and discuss the results carefully and use them to amend our Strategy.

## Communications Strategy Matrix

<b>Who we communicate with:</b>	<b>What to communicate:</b>	<b>How we will communicate:</b>
<b>Individuals</b>	Information Progress Consultation events Structures Studies Volunteering opportunities Decisions	Newspapers Parish newsletters Website Posters Radio Exhibition Brochure
<b>Community Groups</b>	Meetings Information Progress Consultation events Structures Studies	Meetings Surveys Letters Newsletters Leaflets Website
<b>Community Activists</b>	Meetings Progress Opportunities Consultations Structures Volunteering opportunities	Meetings Website Leaflets Focus group Website
<b>Voluntary organisations</b>	Consultations Progress Assistance	Letter Telephone Email Website
<b>Volunteers</b>	Opportunities Meetings Events	Newsletters Poster Leaflets Workshops Website
<b>Potential Centre users</b>	Progress Decisions Consultation events Surveys	Newspapers Newsletters Forums Meetings Website
<b>Business Sector</b>	Information Progress Opportunities	Website Letters Leaflets Visits
<b>Partner organisations</b>	Meetings Progress Assistance	Email Website
<b>Elected members</b>	Progress Decisions Consultation events	Letters Email Newsletters Telephone Website
<b>Funders</b>	Progress	Letter Reports Pro-forma
<b>Local authorities</b>	Progress Assistance	Meetings Email Reports
<b>Staff</b>	Decisions structures	Meetings Letters
<b>Schools</b>	Progress Opportunities Consultations	Letters Newsletters Website
<b>Old People</b>	Information Progress Consultations	Newspapers Website Leaflets
<b>Young People</b>	Information Progress Opportunities Consultations	Website Posters Radio Visits

## Website

It is clear from the Matrix that the internet is to be a major and growing two-way communications medium.

At present the 10 Parishes Centre website is a part of the **wiveliscombe.com** website that has been the main community website for some time. An analysis of the 10 Parishes Centre section of the site concluded:

- It is not easy to get to i.e. it requires several 'clicks' to find the relevant pages
- It is not easy to identify i.e. there are a number of sections of the site bearing the heading "10 parishes"
- It is misnamed – the relevant section is entitled "10 Parishes Family Centre"
- Some of the information relating to the 10 parishes – area and centre – is out-of-date.

Having identified a number of problems with the current website, we do consider that, on balance, it is preferable for the 10 Parishes Centre site to remain a part of the Wiveliscombe.com site. This should ensure that the project remains firmly identifiable as a community initiative.

We shall make improvements to the website by:

- Using a stronger image and identity for the 10 Parishes Centre and making sure any graphics download easily and are relevant
- Ensure that the "home page" is interesting and appealing
- Making the relevant pages easier to find and get to - visitors to the site should be able to navigate to and around it easily and intuitively
- Creating clearly identifiable sub-sections. Website users don't read web pages - they tend to scan them
- Keeping the content simple – we shall tell users what they want to know quickly and concisely, using headlines, bullet points, tables, and links to other site
- Making the content easy to understand – and where necessary include summaries of documents that are written in plain English and avoid jargon
- Keeping the site up-to-date
- Creating an archive for older information and documents
- Providing links to the information and documents of others rather than have them cluttering up the site
- Making two way communication inviting and easy
- Keeping any request and response forms simple and dealing with requests and acknowledging feedback quickly
- Testing the site by setting up a feedback panel and listening to what they say
- Regularly reviewing the site for information that could quickly date or become inaccurate

Most importantly we shall never miss an opportunity to promote the site. The web address will appear on all our correspondence and other printed material, such as:

- advertisements
- stationery
- press releases
- brochures and leaflets

We shall also maximise awareness of our website by:

- registering our site with search engines
- registering our site with online directories
- using email

**Communications Strategy  
Action Plan 2007/08**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Streamline link on website	March 2007	Web manager
Appoint press officer	April 2007	Steering Group
Develop standard format for press releases	April 2007	Press Officer
Community Group consultation meeting	April 2007	Paul Weston
Press releases	On going	Press Officer
Progress Report	Quarterly from April 2007	Steering Group Project Co-ordinator
Website up-date and re-launch	June 2007	Web Manager
Public Exhibition	September 2007	Project Co-ordinator