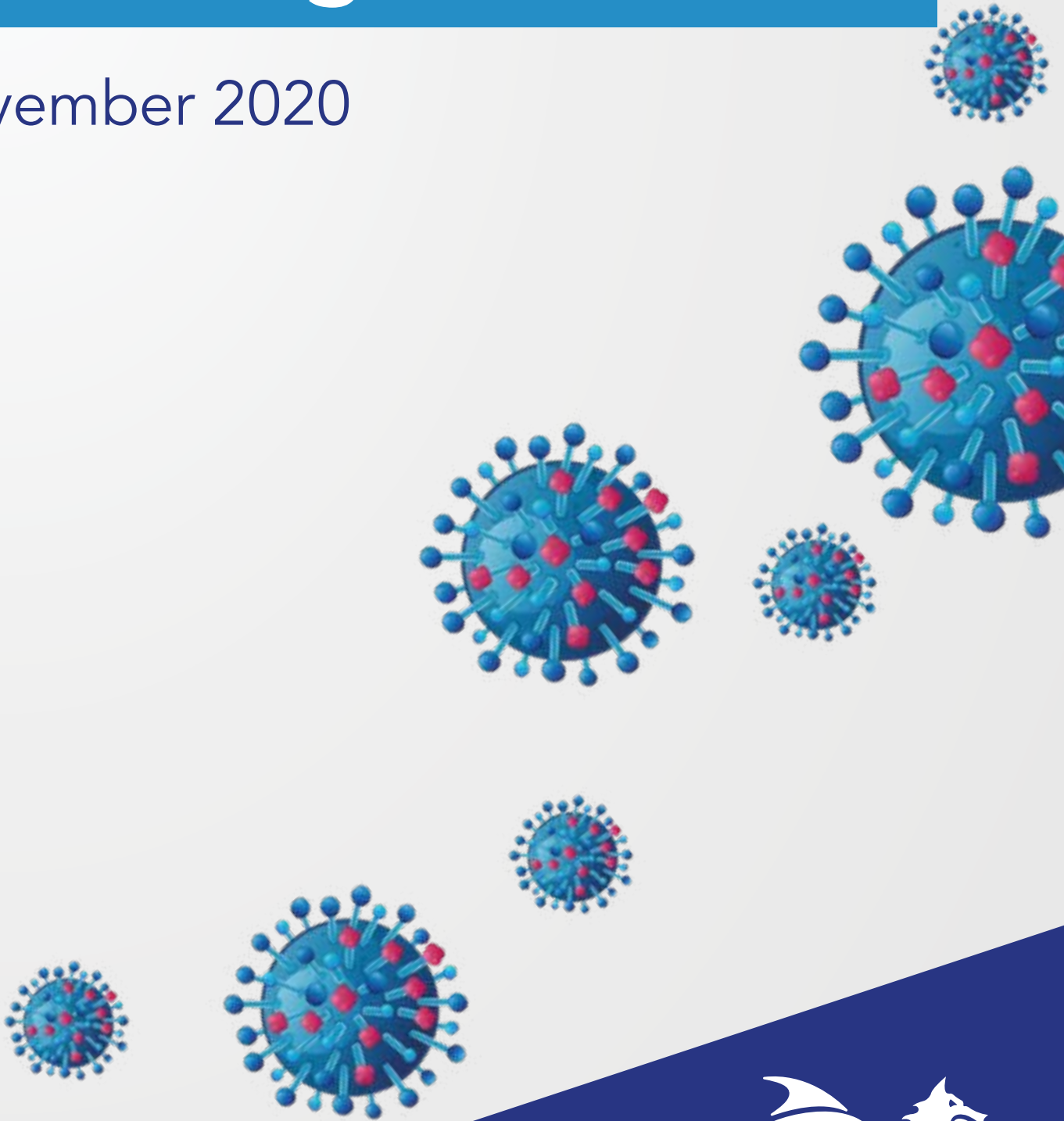


Impact of Covid-19 on Marketing & Media

November 2020



sirgar.llyw.cymru

carmarthenshire.gov.wales

Cyngor **Sir Gâr**
Carmarthenshire
County Council



Marketing and Media

When the pandemic struck, and new regulations and lockdown hit the country the Council marketing and media service were at the heart of how the Council would communicate bilingually the change to services and supporting our communities.

The coronavirus is a Category A major incident (following the categorisation set out in the Marketing and Media 'One Council, One Vision, One Voice' document and the press and media protocol) which means this work took priority over all other areas of marketing and media activity/work. Covid-19 remains to be a unique and changing situation and communication is therefore vital to provide up to date, accurate, consistent information and reassurance to our residents and businesses.

Partnership working

Throughout the pandemic, as was happening pre covid, we are working closely with neighbouring authorities, and other key public services to ensure a consistent message to avoid confusion. Throughout this pandemic we have been in regular meetings with WG to reiterate the message they require to communicate to the whole of Wales.

A regional communication cell meet weekly and Carmarthenshire County Council lead on the IMT communication work.

Keep Carmarthenshire Safe

Our focus would be that all our communication would be directed to the corporate website or intranet in the respect of our staff and members. The reason for this was so that we could capture the continually changing landscape and ensure there was no information out in the public domain from us as a council that was not correct and that all was up to date.



A specific web page was set up with a very effective situation update which highlighted what service change was taking place and informed the public of new regulations and advice from Welsh Government.

A very clear brand was set up internally and externally to ensure that the public, members and staff were aware of the most current situation and that if they saw this particular design then they knew that it was in reference to covid-19.

Our main aim was to be seen as a trusted source of information – and direct to official sources where relevant such as Public Health Wales and Welsh Government.

As the situation improved the communication also evolved not necessarily the principal of how we wanted to communicate but what we needed to communicate, with a greater emphasis on targeting specific key population groups.

Examples of campaigns

Below are four examples of numerous targeted campaigns achieved by the team during the past nine months.

Sir Gâredig

The introduction of **Sir Gâredig** – Sharing Carmarthenshire's kindness. The aim of this aspect of our work was to connect people in need with those that can help. It was an opportunity to provide a focal point for community activities and a friendly term that people could use to share positive stories, images, and video on social media.



This campaign was also an opportunity for people to be inspired to sign up and volunteer within their communities. To help their neighbours and share the good work and kindness that is being shared across Carmarthenshire.

To support this campaign, support slips were provided to all members, banners were erected within communities, a social media campaign, PR was published and some of the vans that supported the shielding packages carried the Sir Garedig branding.

Re-opening of schools

Schools in Carmarthenshire – and across Wales and the UK – were closed on Friday 20 March because of Covid19.

Marketing and media have supported the service throughout from the time where schools required to re-open as childcare hubs for children of critical workers and vulnerable children to the current situation where all schools are open with various regulations to follow.



It is important to communicate regularly with parents and pupils as well as the teachers and all other school staff. This communication has been varied and very much targeted towards its specific audience.

For example, banners suitable for younger pupils were created to ensure they could easily understand the 2m rule.

The key aims and objectives of this area of our work was to communicate clearly and consistently the arrangements for re-opening and reassurance on the safety measure in place for both children and staff.

Sharing positive news stories on the activities, actions taking place in our school has also been an important factor.

Engaging with the community to ensure they too were aware of the arrangements and disseminate accurate information and correct any misinformation that was out there, to put at rest any public doubt or fear was and continues to be an important factor of this campaign.

Llanelli Health Protection Zone

A number of 'local lockdowns' were introduced in places throughout Wales and 26 September 2020 saw a Health Protection Zone being introduced in the Llanelli area with various restrictions in place to try and reduce transmission of the virus.

There was a strong need to communicate urgent new measures to a specific area of the County.

The main messages included people not going outside the health protection zone and not to visit other households or meet other people they do not live with. These restrictions had an impact on a number of key services delivered by the council which needed our support to communicate to all residents. This campaign did not steer away from the key principals of our initial approach and that was to remain a trusted source of information and clearly communicate the 'fire-break' by signposting to the Welsh Government website. As information fatigue starts to kick in the reassurance and communication of clear calls to action was even more important. All local members within the health protection zone were contacted weekly to let them know of the state of play.



100% Sir Gâr

To support our local economy it was suggested that the council provided a method by which people can be signposted to one location and find all Carmarthenshire local produce in one place. With Christmas approaching social media platforms had a scatter gun approach with no central coordination therefore 100% was created that was an identity we could promote and people can identify with and join up to.



The new online showcase has been launched earlier this month and is successfully shining a spotlight on the best of Carmarthenshire's local independent businesses.

100% Sir Gâr is a success as it has been developed in partnership and with the support of town and community councils, business and retail groups. 100% Sir Gâr is a virtual shop window, highlighting a wide range of wonderful home-grown and handmade products by talented local people.

In addition to being a shop window all those businesses have also additional access to information and support to grow and improve their business. We will continue in the new year to support these businesses which undoubtedly will still feel the effect of covid-19.

To date 89 Carmarthenshire businesses have signed up.

Customer Services

There are three Hwbs within Carmarthenshire providing face to face advice and assistance to customers for a range of council enquiries. These service instantly closed their doors following the announcement of a national lockdown. The staff who worked at the contact centre were also told to work from home.



ICT and processes that had already been put in place were very much welcomed as all customer service staff were able to work from home immediately. Team members who were no longer required to handle face to face enquiries were able to step in to support their colleagues and work on the phones from their homes and assist with responding to social media enquiries and email.

The digital processes that were already in place were reviewed to ensure enquiries were responded to as effectively as possible. In addition to this many services where officers were redeployed were having their calls redirected to the contact centre meaning additional call volumes. All staff managed this extremely well.

As services have been slowly reintroduced the contact centre have been fundamental in the support in services going digital and one service in particular being dependent on the support of the team was that of HWRC. A great team effort from recycling, ICT and customer services saw the introduction of appointments, working very well and continues to be the way forward.

Hwbs reopened end of the summer following health and safety approval. Protective screens have been installed and enhanced hygiene practices and prevention methods for staff and customers have been adopted. All three have now reopened and appointments are now being taken to support our residents with their face to face enquiries.

The next stage for customer services is to review all its processes. Many Council services are currently reviewing the way they work and how customers are managed as part of these reviews are fundamental.

Digital engagement has increased considerably since the beginning of the pandemic and hopefully within the next couple of months live chat will be introduced to the corporate website to offer an additional channel for our residents and businesses to contact us.

Month	ACD calls offered	Abandon %	Answer %
March	9,953	1.6%	98.4%
April	21,548	1.0%	99.0%
May	20,288	1.7%	98.3%
June	24,492	0.9%	99.1%
July	30,093	2.6%	97.4%
August	27,843	11.1%	88.9%
September	31,869	20.7%	79.3%
October	25,221	4.8%	95.2%
TOTALS	191,307	5.0%	95.0%

COVID-19 Digital Campaign Statistics

Sessions

Number of site visits

2m

up by **70%**



Social Media Statistics



1,238

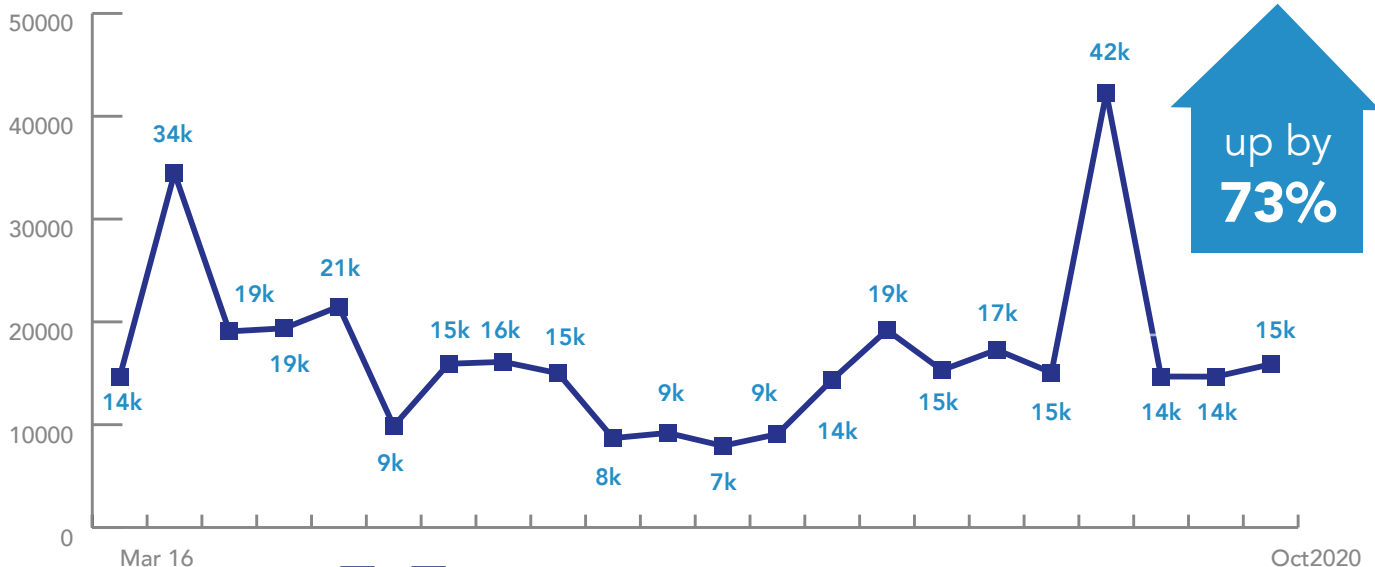


5.61m



10.78m

Website Traffic (March 16 - October 31)



5.5m

 page views across the whole site

Engagement by age and gender and how people access our website

