

Communications round up: November 2025 – February 2026

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## Context

This short document sets out the comms activity that has been undertaken since the last board meeting in November. It follows a 'what, so what, now what' format; first detailing what has been done, then explaining what that means, and then ending on what we might do differently as a result.

## What did we do?

The last few months have seen activity across marketing, media, content and public affairs.

In media, we've been working on a high-profile feature with The Guardian. It is part of a wider series, and sees the reporter (Sam Woolaston) investigate a range of disused buildings. He has focused on department stores, schools and a church. We worked with Sam to identify an appropriate location and settled on St Tyfrydog's in Llandyfydog. Sam brought along three former parishioners – Tom Bown, his wife Jane and his sister Peggy – and a photographer. Because the feature is part of a series, he is awaiting completion of the other stories before he can publish, but it is due to be published 'imminently'. We think this means during March.

Rachel had also been working with The Times on a potential op-ed about the Mission and Pastoral Measure, and had submitted a draft, but the scale of the current news agenda means this has dropped off. While this was a shame, it is also helpful to have made the new contacts and stands us in better stead for the future.

We've also developed comms plans for Gumfreston and Llanddoged, focusing on national and local media respectively, and will launch those plans later in the spring.

Visitors to the website have increased significantly this quarter and at 6,574 unique users are around 10% higher this quarter, and 75% higher year-on-year. This continues to be driven by search and by the email newsletter, which performs very highly.

We did a lot of work on the website in the run-up to the Christmas period, both to improve the customer journey and conversion, and also to tap into the Christmas gifts market. We set up a new page to market Christmas gift memberships, and redrafted it for SEO to make it more searchable by Google. This resulted in a conversion rate of around 27%, significantly higher than last quarter (22%) and higher again than the one before that (15%).

In the last update, we told trustees that we had applied for a Google Grant and I am pleased to say that we were successful in that application. The grant gives us \$10,000 per month in Google Ads. This is not without strings, however, and there are conditions attached on the quality of those ads, and how often they convert. We're looking into how much internal resource it would take to maintain that grant, and will report back at the next meeting.

We've also been focusing on our communications strategy, working through our objectives and audiences to better understand what will have the most impact. We've developed some competitor research, looking at the media stories that organisations like CCT and NCT routinely generate, and we have built a database of all the MPs that have one or more of our churches within their constituencies.

### **So what does this mean?**

As per our last update, the approach that we are taking seems to be working. The high conversion rates around Christmas are unlikely to be sustainable, but are very welcome. These small, incremental improvements to the website and to content drive traffic and keeping people on the site for longer.

We did experience a dip in local news coverage over this quarter, and that is mostly because we were spending some time planning and looking at the wider strategy. The work with the Guardian and with local papers in Gumfreston and in Llanddoged should off-set this, but we are keeping an eye out.

### **Now what?**

We know that there is still so much more to do, so while we'll be doing more of the same (iterating our content and tweaking the website to increase performance), we'll also be focusing on the wider brand building activities like content and stories, as well as media opportunities. You'll also have heard about our emerging plans for the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and we expect that next month's update will include some more thinking about those.

