

# The Cat's Whispers

From Red Cat Communications

Spring 2010

## Oops! Rubbish spelling leaves council red-faced

Oh dear, Sandwell Council. Your recycling bins have revealed some really rubbish spelling.

The nifty bins have appeared on a busy shopping street in Bearwood, Smethwick. They're a great idea—but who on earth wrote the blurb explaining what can go in them?

In a ghastly grammar gaffe, apostrophes have been put in words that are merely plurals.

Embarrassed Sandwell Council Press Office Manager Steve Harrison said: "This looks dreadful, I know. I winced

when I saw those apostrophes. Our only excuse is that we're putting recycling before punctuation!

"The bins came with the error from the company supplying them. We spotted it but decided it was more important to get the bins out on the streets—and doing the job they're designed for—than leave them lying idle until the apostrophes could be erased.

"We will get the mistake corrected as soon as we can, though." Nice one, Steve.



- Recycling bins: those troublesome words circled (above)

• Bin boob: Those spellings, close up

## LGA scores own goal with latest 'banned' words list

The Local Government Association has published its latest list of words local councils should ban from use... and ignored it itself.

The LGA has shown how difficult jargon can be to get rid of—as it uses one of its banned phrases on its own website.

In the section 'About LGA', it describes its 'cross-cutting' priorities—a

phrase on 250-word banned list. Oops!

Other words on the list (not on their website, we hasten to add) include: triologue, webinar, wellderly and tonality.

The LGA list aims to highlight words and phrases the public sector should avoid when communicating with people—although it does not give alternatives, which might be helpful.

It has also launched a plain English webpage (part of the Improvement & Development Agency) offering advice and guidance on the use of English, which is very good.

### Weblinks

The LGA website can be found by clicking here:

<http://tiny.cc/1BQXW>

The plain English advice webpage is here:

<http://tiny.cc/MhmQ1>

## Tweet your event?

Have you thought about 'tweeting' a public event?

It could offer you: *direct contact* with those not attending; *immediate feedback* and an additional way of *communicating* to colleagues, partners and the public.

Lots of organisations are giving it a go as a first step into the world of social media.

Red Cat can tweet for you, if you're not up to speed with how it works.

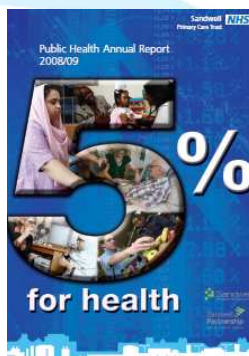
Get in touch for details.

## New clients: newsletters

Two new Red Cat clients are hoping to get their message across with appealing, readable newsletters.

Accountants John Seeley & Co want to show their personality through their bulletins—and prove that financial issues don't have to be dull. The Department of Health West Midlands wants its new newsletter to promote health and well-being issues—and celebrate success stories.

## Health report completed



Red Cat has just completed the 20th Public Health Annual Report for Sandwell.

It analyses the devastating effect of the recession on the borough's health and suggests investment plans.

## Odds & Ends

- A WM Teaching Public Health Network event got evaluated by our *Press Here* service in January.
- Red Cat 'spruced up' a **Compassionate Communities** conference report ready for printing.
- We are still in the saddle on a self-help cycling guide. *More to come...*

Red Cat can help you do better business.

Contact us for support in communications, media, training or writing.

Call: 0121 420 2959, E: [info@redcatcomms.co.uk](mailto:info@redcatcomms.co.uk), visit: [www.redcatcomms.co.uk](http://www.redcatcomms.co.uk)

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