



Community Engagement Strategy **Adopted 16/09/24**

The Parish Council has developed this document as a means of exploring how it can improve its engagement with residents and the community. It is intended to provide a framework of best practice; to draw together activities and practices which have been developed over the years to produce a closer working relationship with the community it represents. The Parish Council recognises that engagement is a two-way process between itself and its residents. This document is not intended to become a static document but one which will evolve over time reflecting the changes in the community.

1. Aims – Inform, Consult and Involve

To continuously improve the way in which the Parish Council engages and consults with the community and key partners. To this end all residents should be:

- Informed of the council's activities and projects
- Consulted on council's activities and projects
- Have the opportunity to be involved in the Council's activities and projects

This will result in the views/opinions of the community becoming an integral part of the Parish Council's decision-making process, improve the services provided by the Council and ensure the Council better reflects the community it represents.

2. Objective

Use consultation to improve the services the Parish Council delivers, to ensure these services reflect the community's needs and aspirations.

3. Strategy – Communication and Consultation

The Parish Council will achieve its objective through the following means:

Communication

The Parish Council recognises the need to use different methods of communication to reach all sections of the community, and each method used will include details of how the public can contact the Council.

- **Notice Boards** – Agendas, minutes, news and useful information will be provided on the Parish Council's notice boards.
- **Annual Report** – The Council is committed to producing an Annual Report which includes a range of information about the Parish Council.
- **Website** – The Parish Council's website will be used to provide information about the Council's activities including meeting agendas and minutes as well as information about other organisations in the area. Will include news feed on local interest items and Parish Council developments.
- **Meetings** – Meetings are open to the public and include an opportunity for the public to speak as part of the meeting.

- **Councillors** – The Councillors are well known members of the community and are easily accessible for those residents who wish to contact them. Many are also members of other organisations within the community. This provides a valuable opportunity for Councillors to learn about the needs and aspirations of the area as well as to tell residents what the Council is doing. All Councillors are volunteers that freely give their time to serve the community; parishioners should respect councillors' time and privacy and use discretion when raising council business.
- **Newsletters** - The Parish Council will consider dissemination of information via ad-hoc newsletters, as appropriate.

Consultation

The Parish Council will consult residents, both formally and informally, at every opportunity when making important decisions.

It is also open to receiving representations from members of the public, through telephone calls and emails to the Clerk and individual Councillors.

- **Parish Council Meetings** - Parish Councillors will take into consideration matters raised by residents during the Public Open Session part of its Parish Council meetings.
- **Questionnaires** - The Parish Council will seek the views of the residents on significant changes or improvements in the village through the use of questionnaires.
- **Partnership Working** - To achieve the council's objectives, it is essential for the Parish Council/Councillors to support other groups, organisations and individuals within the community to achieve their aspirations. It is also important that the Council works with other authorities providing services within the area including the principle authority and the Police. The Parish Council will endeavour to take part in consultation exercises undertaken by the authorities and other bodies that provide services to its residents.
- **Managing Expectation** - The Parish Council is aware that increased communications with residents can result in an increased workload and it is therefore important to manage both the increased work load and resident's expectations.
- **Council Response Times** - The Parish Council will respond to all communications whether by telephone, email or postal letter within 10 working days (Monday through Friday) of receipt of the communication with the requested information or with information regarding actions being taken where appropriate.

4. Measuring Success of the Strategy

For the strategy to be effective it must be reviewed in terms of appropriateness and relevance to the changing community but also in terms of how effective it has been. This can be achieved through informal monitoring a number of different aspects of the Council's activities:

- Responses to council consultations
- Residents contact with clerk and councillors
- Residents attendance to council meetings

5. Changes to this policy

The Parish Council will review this policy annually (in May) or as is necessary and appropriate.