



SHERE PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The Council aims to provide services of high quality and to represent the interests of its residents throughout its area. To do this successfully, we will seek to involve the community in decision-making by: ensuring knowledge and information about the Council's activities and local issues is made available; seeking out, listening to and acting on feedback where practicable and warranted; and delivering on what we promise to the community or explaining why not openly and honestly.
- 1.2. This statement explains how we will try to engage with the community, what we aim to achieve, how we will do it, and how we can try to measure progress in meeting these commitments.

2. The community

- 2.1. The Council is directly responsible to the people of its area, who collectively form the community. The core of the community are all the local residents who finance the activities of the Council and any local groups who represent their interests.
- 2.2. The wider community includes local businesses and commercial services and a wide range of partner organisations who also deliver public services within the Parish. Additionally, there are other third parties who interact and impact our community whose interests the Council will consider including non-residents working in the Parish, visitors and tourists.

3. Aims and objectives

- 3.1. The council aims to ensure that residents and the bodies making up the community are appropriately involved in the decision-making process, particularly in relation to the provision of services and facilities and matters that directly impact individuals or sections of the community.
- 3.2. Whenever possible and practical, the council will encourage the involvement of community members in order to identify their needs and concerns and enable them to play an effective role in setting priorities, designing services and influencing decisions.
- 3.3. Specific objectives include:
 - 3.3.1 Establishing new or improved channels of communication and engagement;
 - 3.3.2 Sharing information and knowledge with residents and the wider community;
 - 3.3.3 Seeking feedback in advance of setting priorities, designing services or taking decisions that impact on members of the community;
 - 3.3.4 Making use of social media and other forms of communication to try to broaden our reach to those who are unable to attend meetings (subject to legislation)

3.4. To this end, the council will aim to maintain and develop effective working relationships with all sectors of the community with the hope that this will lead to:

- Improved satisfaction with public services in the area
- A greater sense within the community that people are involved in decisions which affect them
- Greater awareness within the community of the role, responsibilities and constraints of the council

4. Opportunities for community involvement (to achieve aims and objectives)

4.1. The council will seek to engage with the community by providing:

- An accessible council office at the heart of the community
- An attractive and engaging website shereparishcouncil.gov.uk which includes a wide range of information and how the community can contact the council or councillors
- Link on website to encourage members of the community to make suggestions to the council
- A monthly news report for the two parish magazines covering the parish
- A sign -up email, open to all, but especially for reaching those not receiving the parish magazine, using social media or able to attend meetings
- An Annual Report summarising the council's activities for the year to every resident
- A timetable of council and committee meetings and encouraging public attendance, including holding the meetings around the villages
- Details of agendas for all council and committee meetings on noticeboards throughout the town / village, as well as on the council website
- A period of time at the start of council and committee meetings for questions from members of the public
- Minutes of all council and committee meetings on the council website
- Nominated councillors as representatives to outside bodies with interests affecting the area
- Formation, where viable and appropriate of working groups consisting of councillors and members of the community to tackle important matters of community concern
- The organisation for the Annual Parish Assembly, which is open to all residents
- Drop-in centre for residents to engage with each other and feel part of the community, with an opportunity to discuss community matters or leave feedback on the council services

5. Opportunities for formal representation to the council

5.1. The council may appoint advisors on specific areas of activity where their expertise would assist the council in its decision making, but equally welcomes public participation at council and committee meetings.

5.2. On a regular basis, the Clerk (or other nominated officer) is generally available to meet those who may wish to attend the council office in order to discuss matters of interest or concern.

5.3. From time-to-time particular topics arise which are of sufficient community wide interest to justify the organisation of a public meeting, and/or Parish wide DIRECT written consultation, and the council will make arrangements for such meetings or direct consultation to be held, should such a situation arise.

6. Attempting to Measuring the success of the aims and objectives

6.1 Indications of success might be given by yearly, with a report based on the following:

- Measuring number of visitors to the website, identifying popular pages

- Numbers of people signing up and receiving email updates
- Increase in activity on social media
- Public engagement at meetings
- Larger participation at the Annual Parish Assembly
- Feedback from the Drop-in Centre
- Suggestions received through the website and directly

6.1. An annual survey gathering views on the level and effectiveness of engagement and responsiveness to residents' concerns. The findings to be published together with a follow up action plan.

Adopted by Full Council: 4th March 2021

To be reviewed: March 2024