



# Community Engagement Strategy

## Version Control

Review Date	Version no	Amendment
16/06/2022	1	Policy adopted

## Overview:

Community engagement is concerned with giving local people a voice and involving them in decisions which affect them and their community. This may include individuals, voluntary and community organisations as well as other public sector bodies.

It provides opportunity for local people to talk to the council about their aspirations and or needs in their community and neighbourhood. It allows the council to consult with and inform people about what services it provides, how it prioritises, how policies are determined and how well it is performing.

## Aim

The aim of the strategy is to improve the way in which the Council informs and consults its residents and partners on important issues by

- sharing information
- collecting views and listening to them, and
- being inclusive and engaging with all of its residents and partners

## Objectives

The objectives of this strategy are to;

- Encourage effective local community engagement
- Ensure is clear understanding of the need to engage with communities about decisions that affect them;
- Enable aspirations/comments/suggestions obtained from community engagement to have an impact on decision making and the way services are being delivered;
- Identify how the council can enhance its profile by improving engagement with the wider community (with specific reference to hard to reach groups).

## Introduction

As representatives of the community the Council are continuing to improve the quality and range of local services in the Parish. The Council is therefore committed to becoming actively involved in all parts of the community by working closely with voluntary and community groups in order to understand their needs. The Council will achieve this by working in partnership with the local authority and other agencies.

Weston Turville Parish Council are committed in engaging residents by encouraging them to become actively involved in decisions that affect them and the community and to help facilitate the delivery of better services by creating a more active and informed community.

The key aspects of community engagement include:

- Development of a network of relationships between council, individuals, voluntary and community groups.
- Clear and open communication to ensure that information is made accessible to all groups.
- Listening and understanding from a range of people to identify aspirations, needs and problems of local people and groups.

The Parish Council achieve this by using the following strategies.

### **INFORMING THE COMMUNITY**

- Making information available on what decisions are being considered and how residents can give their opinions. Agendas of the meetings are posted on the notice boards and on the website. Monthly minutes are published on the website.
- The monthly Parish Council meetings are open to members of the public and a time is set aside at the commencement of the meeting for residents to make comments or to ask questions.
- The quarterly publication of the Weston Turville Times is distributed, by volunteers to all households in the village.
- The web site includes a comprehensive summary of the facilities and organisations available within the area.
- The Parish Council's Facebook page will be used to advertise and provide information on events or incidents affecting the parish.

### **GIVING PEOPLE A VOICE**

- The Annual Parish Meeting is used for obtaining the views of residents on matters affecting the community.
- Notice of the Annual Parish Meeting is posted on the notice boards and website and advertised on the Council's Facebook page.
- Residents may also submit items which they wish to be raised at a Council meeting, or give their view on a particular topic to the Clerk or any Parish council member.
- When dealing with other authorities or organisations regarding issues affecting the community, the Parish Council will ensure that the opinions of the members of the community are made known.
- The Council aims to be proactive in getting information to, and obtaining the opinions of, all sections of the community – especially the hard to reach groups such as the elderly and the housebound.

### **ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY**

- Where information affects a specific section of the community, the Parish Council will ensure the information is disseminated to the appropriate group(s) e.g. the over 60's, mothers and toddlers, teenagers, youths and school children.
- Consultations and surveys will be carried out where appropriate and the results communicated.

- The Parish Council will endeavour to participate in community activities and events and councillors are involved in various activities around the Parish i.e. Bridge Club, Village Hall Managements and Events, Women’s Institute, Countryside Group, Church and Charity Events which enables the community to become more aware of who we are and what we do.

### Consultation

Consulting the community on important issues will be key to the strategy. It will ensure those most affected are able to put forward an opinion and are given the opportunity to be involved in making a difference.

Ensuring consultations include all members of the parish by identifying the hard to reach groups such as young people, the elderly, the housebound, the disabled, ethnic minorities, etc. which may require establishing different engagement channels for them.

### Action Plan for information to the Community

Item	Task	Responsibility	Status
Annual Parish Meeting	Publicise widely to increase attendance	Staff/Councillors	Ongoing
Open Forum at monthly meetings	Encourage residents to raise any matters of interest or concern via the public participation element of all Full Council and Committee meetings	Staff/Councillors	Ongoing
Minutes	Ensure copies of minutes are available on the website or hard copy on request to the Clerk	Staff	Ongoing
Annual Report	Annual Report to be produced and available both electronically or hard copy on request to the Clerk, with a summary in the WT Times	Staff/Councillors	Ongoing
WT Times	Produce and distribute quarterly to all homes and businesses in the parish.	Staff/Councillors	Ongoing
Noticeboard	Keep noticeboards updated with information on council and other community interest matters	Staff/Councillors	Ongoing
Website	Maintain website with meeting details, agenda, minutes and other council services and activities.	Staff/Councillors	Ongoing
Social Media	Use facebook page to promote local activities, events, issues eg road closures	Staff/Councillors	Ongoing
Consultation	Use surveys promoted via facebook and website to consult with the parish on projects	Staff/Councillors	When new projects considered

## Appendix 1

Some ideas/initiatives to further enhance the Council's commitment to community engagement:

Event	Details
Sunflower Challenge	<p>PC to provide sunflower seeds to entrants</p> <p>Various categories, eg tallest, shortest, largest diameter etc</p>
Blood bank drive	<p>Arrange for the Mobile Blood Bank to set up in Village Hall or car park.</p> <p>Collaboration with Wendover Community Board area</p>
Easter Egg Hunt	<p>Pictures of Easter eggs with a name to go in windows around the parish – could do one hunt for each area.</p> <p>Sheets provided to entrants to write the names of the eggs found, to be collected from the parish office</p> <p>Easter eggs to be given to those who find all eggs</p>
Swap Shop event Working with Climate Action Group	<p>No electrical items.</p> <p>Upcycle/recycle exchange and swap</p>
Village Fun Run	<p>Raise money for local charity</p> <p>Run could be around the new path at the recreation ground</p> <p>If going outside the field, would likely need permits and martialts for main road closures</p>
The Village BIG Quiz Night	<p>Event to be held at Village Hall</p> <p>Lots of benefits – social, fund raising</p> <p>Ask Chandos to run a bar for the event</p> <p>Food? Curry from local takeaway? Fish and chips? Street food?</p>
<p>A village Gardening Day</p> 	<p>Eg: planting bulbs and flower seeds under all the village Road signs next year</p>
Litter Pick Bingo/Scavenger Hunt	<p>Encourage more participation at parish litter pick days by making it fun</p> <p>Providing a Bingo Points sheet with things on it like:</p>

	<p>Drinks can, water bottle, crisp packet, cigarette butts, sweet wrapper, something bigger than a tennis ball, a strange trash object, plastic fork/spoon etc., tissue/hanky</p> <p>1 point per square marked</p> <p>5 bonus points for a full house</p> <p>The winner that can present the strangest object with a proven photo of where it was</p> <p>A little prize/award</p>
Village Bingo Night	<p>In the village hall</p> <p>Event to be held at Village Hall</p> <p>Lots of benefits – social, fund raising</p> <p>Ask Chandos to run a bar for the event</p> <p>Food? Curry from local takeaway? Fish and chips? Street food?</p>
Best Kept Village 2023	<p>Event run annually</p> <p>Encourages pride in the local area</p> <p>Areas are judged on their condition of community facilities eg village hall, playing fields, churches, local shops etc</p> <p>Entry deadline is usually April</p>
Film Screening	<p>Either in Village Hall or outside on recreational grounds</p> <p>Would need a single title screening licence</p> <p>Combine with street food night?</p>
<p>To help support the events, set up a Weston Turville Volunteer Group</p> <p>Purpose: improve community engagement</p>	<p>A sub group (should include at least 2 Parish Councillors)</p> <p>Provides support to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Parish Day and any other ad hoc events</li> <li>• Litter picking</li> <li>• Christmas lights around the village</li> <li>• Organising hanging baskets around the village/flower planting</li> </ul>