



### Controlled Document

<b>Title</b>	Community Engagement Policy
<b>Author</b>	Lenham Parish Council
<b>Owner</b>	Lenham Parish Council
<b>Subject</b>	Main Policy Documents
<b>Government Security Classification</b>	Official
<b>Document Version</b>	Version 1
<b>Created</b>	18.11.2025
<b>Approved By</b>	Full Council
<b>Review Date</b>	01.04.2028

### Version Control

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Description of Change</b>	<b>Sign</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>01.04.2026</b>	<b>Lenham Parish Council</b>	<b>Original Policy</b>	<b>L.Westcott</b>

## **Lenham Parish Council Community Engagement Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

Lenham Parish Council (LPC) is committed to working in an open, transparent, and accountable way that encourages meaningful community involvement. Effective engagement enables the Council to understand local needs, improve decision-making, strengthen local democracy, and ensure that all communities in Lenham, Platts Heath, and the surrounding settlements have a voice in shaping local services and projects.

This policy outlines LPC's approach to engaging residents, community groups, local businesses, and partner organisations in decision-making and service delivery.

### **2. Purpose of the Policy**

This policy aims to:

- a. Ensure residents and stakeholders can participate in multiple ways to help make Lenham a better place.
- b. Establish clear principles for how LPC engages with different groups in the community.
- c. Identify the methods the Council will use to communicate and seek feedback.
- d. Set consistent expectations for councillors, staff, and residents regarding engagement and communication.
- e. Strengthen partnerships with other councils, agencies, and voluntary organisations.

### **3. Who We Engage With**

LPC engages with a wide range of local stakeholders, including:

- a. Residents of Lenham, Platts Heath and surrounding settlements
- b. Community and voluntary groups
- c. Schools, youth groups, churches, and sports clubs
- d. Local businesses, developers, and landowners
- e. Neighbouring parishes
- f. Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) and Kent County Council (KCC) (and the successors under Local Government Reform)
- g. Emergency services and other public agencies
- h. Underrepresented groups and protected communities

### **4. Principles of Engagement**

LPC's community engagement is guided by the following principles:

- a. **Openness and Transparency** - Decisions, actions, and responsibilities will be shared clearly, promptly, and accessibly.
- b. **Inclusivity** - Engagement will be accessible to all, including those with protected characteristics or who are underrepresented.

- c. **Respect and Accountability** - Residents' views will be considered and responded to respectfully, with clear explanations of how feedback influenced decisions.
- d. **Responsiveness** - The Council will value existing channels and adapt engagement methods to suit different situations.
- e. **Proportionality** - The level of engagement will reflect the significance and potential impact of the issue or project.
- f. **Collaboration and Empowerment** - Where appropriate, the Council will involve communities as partners in decision-making and provide opportunities for shared ownership of outcomes.

## 5. Methods of Engagement

LPC uses a variety of methods to inform, consult, involve, collaborate with, and empower communities:

### 5.1 Council Meetings and Public Forums

- a. Public participation sessions at Full Council and relevant Committees
- b. The Annual Parish Meeting
- c. Presentations for major proposals or projects

### 5.2 Digital Communication

- a. LPC website news and updates
- b. Social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube)
- c. Online surveys

### 5.3 Printed and Physical Communication

- a. Parish noticeboards and office window
- b. Articles in local publications (e.g., Lenham Focus)
- c. Posters, flyers, and displays

### 5.4 Direct Engagement

- a. Attendance at community events and local gatherings
- b. Themed engagement sessions or councillor drop-ins
- c. Meetings with stakeholder groups
- d. Support for village organisations and societies
- e. Partnership work with MBC, KCC, Kent Police and other agencies

### 5.5 Emergency engagement

Urgent matters may be communicated rapidly to residents (e.g. road closures) via social media and leaflet drops.

### 5.6 Accessibility

All communications and consultations will be made as accessible as possible (language, formats, online/offline options).

## 6. Consultation and Decision-Making

LPC seeks community input on matters of significant impact, including:

- a. Major planning or development proposals
- b. Neighbourhood planning initiatives
- c. Changes to parish facilities, amenities, or services
- d. Environmental, traffic, or public realm initiatives
- e. Major capital projects

Process:

- a. Results will be considered before decisions are made.
- b. Feedback summaries will be published to show residents how views influenced outcomes.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

### 7.1 Parish Councillors

- a. Represent local views and engage with residents
- b. Attend engagement events where appropriate
- c. Report resident concerns back to the Council
- d. Uphold high standards of communication and conduct

### 7.2 Parish Clerk

- a. Coordinate engagement activities
- b. Maintain accurate, timely communication channels
- c. Support councillors in facilitating engagement

### 7.3 Residents and Stakeholders

- a. Participate in consultations and public meetings
- b. Provide constructive feedback
- c. Engage through appropriate channels

### 7.4 Partners

- a. Voluntary, public, and private sector partners are responsible for their own engagement activities and working collaboratively with LPC where relevant.

## **8. Measuring Success**

Effectiveness of engagement will be monitored through:

- a. Attendance at meetings and events
- b. Consultation and survey response rates
- c. Website and social media statistics
- d. Participation in community groups and activities
- e. Feedback from residents and stakeholders

The Council's Annual Report will include a section summarising engagement activity and outcomes.

## **9. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if required by legislative or best-practice changes.

For more information on this strategy please contact the Parish Clerk.