



Community Engagement Policy

1. Introduction

1. This policy guides Seend Parish Council's communication and public engagement, ensuring clear channels between the Council and the community.

2. Aims

- 2.1. The policy sets out the role of community engagement and its importance, and how Seend Parish Council will:
- 2.2. work more closely with residents, and business and community groups
- 2.3. engage with as many people as possible in decision making, monitoring services and planning for the future
- 2.4. use a wide range of approaches to community engagement so residents feel encouraged to share their views, ideas, and concerns.
- 2.5. use the views of the residents as an integral part of the decision-making process; and
- 2.6. ensure that residents have opportunities to be heard at every stage

3. Objectives

The Council is committed to building positive relationships with all parts of the community, based on trust, openness, and honest conversation.

- 3.1. The Council's objectives include:
 - 3.1.1. making it easier for people to share their thoughts and ideas by creating new ways for them to get involved
 - 3.1.2. improving residents' understanding of the role of the Council and Councillors
 - 3.1.3. improving engagement so more people feel involved in their area; and
 - 3.1.4. improving satisfaction with council services.
- 3.2. Engagement should be both meaningful and purposeful and those involved should be able to understand how their views were considered.

4. Principles

When engaging with the community the council will consider:

- 4.1. *Inclusivity*: Engage a diverse range of voices, especially underrepresented groups.

4.2. *Proportionality*: Tailor engagement methods to the scale and impact of the decision.

4.3. *Transparency*: Be clear about the purpose, scope, and influence of engagement.

4.4. *Consistency*: Apply the principles across all our committees and projects.

5. Seend Parish Council and Community Engagement

5.1. The parish council will encourage people in the community to get involved in these ways:

Letting people know what decisions are coming up and how they can share their views or get involved before decisions are made. Methods used to ensure engagement might include: the Town Council website, social media, local media, notice boards, newsletters, posters, surveys (paper, in-person and online), reports, and word of mouth.

5.1.1. all meetings of the parish Council and its committees are open to the public and press with time reserved for residents to speak. Residents can access agendas for meetings via the parish Council web site and notice boards. Information is available to explain the procedure for residents wishing to speak at meetings

5.1.2. planning applications are considered at meetings of Full Council. Equal opportunity is given to applicants/supporters and objectors

5.1.3. the parish Clerk and designated officers are available to provide impartial information and support to anyone seeking advice to encourage more involvement especially from the harder to reach members of the community who may not engage with electronic information.

5.1.4. details of how to contact the Clerk are displayed on the council website and notice boards

5.1.5. The Parish Council will publish a calendar of annual council and committee meeting dates

5.1.6. The Parish Council will be open and accountable in its dealings with residents and the community

5.1.7. The Parish Council will be receptive to requests from residents or communities and will attempt to be flexible to ensure their opinions are known not only to the council but also to other organisations. This may be by including an item for discussion on an agenda or allowing a local group to put their opinions into an official report undertaken by the council.

6. Communication

6.1. Seend parish council is committed to improving community engagement by:

6.1.1. continuing current activities and services while strengthening relationships with community groups, especially by developing ways to incorporate feedback from underrepresented people and organisations.

6.1.2. actively reaching out and staying open to any reasonable possibilities that help share information with the community and encourage more participation, particularly from groups that are hard to connect with

6.1.3. considering the holding of public meetings when dealing with controversial issues that affect a particular community

6.1.4. considering the use of consultations and surveys, when necessary and appropriate, and making the results available

6.1.5. identifying and embracing opportunities to work with other local community groups when the need arises

6.1.6. publicising the positive results that have been achieved from working relationships between the council and other community groups, to encourage new relationships/partnerships to be formed and to raise community spirit

6.1.7. promoting elections, the importance of the democratic process and the value of being a councillor.

7. Provision of Information to the Community

Seend Parish Council will make available to the community information relating to who we are, what we do, what we spend and how we spend it, how we make decisions, our policies and procedures and the services we offer.

7.1. Information will be provided to the community in the following ways:

7.1.1. Contact details for the Clerk and all Councillors are displayed on the council's website

7.1.2. The council's website address is widely published, and the site contains much of the information an individual might wish to know about the work of the parish Council, its officers, and councillors, including meeting minutes, policy documents, financial statements, the annual report and how to contact anyone associated with the council.

7.1.3. Information such as agendas is published on the parish Council's notice boards as well as on its website.

8. Freedom of Information

8.1. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this document will be posted on the council website.

9. Outcomes

9.1. The outcomes which the parish Council is striving for and against which the success of this policy will be measured are:

9.1.1. improved communication through the establishment of new channels of engagement

9.1.2. improved understanding by residents of the role of Councillors and getting the best from them

9.1.3. improved engagement with local communities, with more people feeling that they are involved in decision-making

9.1.4. improved satisfaction with the service provided by the council.