

BRYMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF INTENT AS TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - PROCEDURE

Aims and Objectives

The council's aims and objectives for seeking community engagement and the outcomes it hopes to achieve are:

Aims:

- Work more closely with residents, businesses and community groups;
- Engage with as many people as possible who want to participate in decision-making, monitoring services and planning for the future;
- Ensure that, by getting closer to the community and being accessible to all groups, local democracy is enhanced;
- Ensure that through the use of a wide range of approaches to public involvement and community engagement, we actively encourage the involvement of residents, to capture their views and learn their concerns and effectively use those views as an integral part of the decision-making process;
- Ensure that residents have the opportunities to be heard at every stage, and the capacity to be effective citizens.

Objectives:

This strategy is part of the council's commitment to creating and maintaining effective working relationships with all sectors of the community, based on trust, openness and constructive challenge.

Outcomes of the strategy will include:

- Improved communication through the establishment of new channels of engagement.
- More residents understanding the role of Councillors and getting the best effect.
- Improved engagement with local communities, with more people feeling that they are involved in decision-making and a higher percentage of people involved in volunteering.
- Improved satisfaction with services provided by the Council.

Defining the Community

Brympton is both an urban and rural Parish situated on the outskirts of Yeovil, Somerset and includes the hamlets of Alvington, Brympton, Lufton and Thorne Coffin. There are also three trading estates within the parish - Abbey Manor, Houndstone and Lufton. The principal authorities are South Somerset District Council and Somerset County Council. There are over 3100 residential properties including approximately 5500 electorate (as at December 2018)

The community may be defined as consisting of residents of the parish; and

- Abbey Community Association Trustees & users of the Community Hall,
- Head Teacher and Governors of Preston & Kingfisher Primary Schools,
- Young people who live and/or go to school in the parish,
- Retail and other and Businesses in the community,
- Interest groups – clubs and societies e.g. Brownies, Scouts etc
- Voluntary organisations,
- Church Groups,
- Farming Community,
- Groups of people defined by a common factor such as age, disability, faith, and other groups,
- Councillors and public service representatives including Council Staff.

Role of Council Members and Officers

- The Parish is non-political with 12 Councillors identified in the community, via newsletters, the website and published in the Council's annual report.
- There is one officer of the Council, who covers the entire spectrum of the council work, and is currently based at the Parish Office. Members of the public are welcome to make appointments at mutually convenient times to visit the office. The officer is frequently dealing with meetings or in contact via email, telephone and letters etc.

Provision of Information to the Community

- Messages can be left 24/7 either by telephone or email.
- The names and addresses of all the Councillors are published on the website. The names of Councillors are published in 'Newslink' and on noticeboards, together with their Council function (if Chairman or Vice-Chairman) and representation on external local public bodies..
- The Parish Council website address is also widely published, and the site contains all the information an individual might wish to know about the work of the Parish Council and its individuals, including meeting minutes, policy documents, financial statements, annual report and how to contact anyone associated with the Council.
- The council prints "Newslink" on a regular basis and this is delivered to every household and business within the parish.
- Information, such as agendas of meetings, is published on the 10 noticeboards around the parish.
- The Police Beat Officer, Police Community Support Officer and members of the press are invited to attend every Council meeting.

Opportunities for Community Involvement

- It is recognised that members of the community may wish to engage with the Council at different levels - from the odd email or letter with a suggestion on how a service could be improved, to regular attendance at a Council meeting.
- Parish Council meetings are open to the public and there is a public forum at the commencement of each council meeting.
- An Annual Parish Meeting is usually held in April, giving the public an opportunity to participate in the full meeting. This meeting is advertised widely and is used by the Council to report on the work carried out during the year. It is also an opportunity for the Council to obtain the views of residents on any matter which affects the community.
- The council undertakes consultations by questionnaire, public meetings as appropriate, for specific issues.
- Active feedback is sought at all times and Councillors attend such events to "spread the word" on the role of the Council and encourage people to participate in local affairs with specific local issues being explored from time to time using the full range of communication techniques available.
- The Council is always considering practical ways of engaging with people and community groups.
- The Council will continue to arrange, support and participate in community events, such as Somerset Rural Youth Project in Oak Tree Park

Involvement with Partnerships

The council has a representative on the following

- Abbey Community Association
- Somerset Association of Local Councils
- The council is in a joint partnership with South Somerset District Council working on the Larkhill Open Space Project
- The council manages Higher Ream Play Area on behalf of South Somerset District Council.

Contact the Parish Council:

The Council and members may be contacted through the Parish Clerk:

Mrs Elizabeth James, Yeovil, BA21 3JH

The Parish Office, Abbey Community Office, The Forum, Abbey Manor Park, Yeovil Telephone: 01935 424332

e-mail: clerk@brymptonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.brymptonparishcouncil.gov.uk