

Community Engagement Strategy

Community Engagement refers to the process by which groups such as ours build ongoing relationships with the community for the purpose of applying a collective vision for the benefit of the community.

1. Introduction

Community engagement is a well-studied field and much has been published about it. There are organisations who specialise in nothing but this area. For the purposes of this strategy we will adopt the principles defined by the International Association for Public Participation, IAP2.

IAP2 recognises five levels of engagement; informing, consulting, involving, co-opting and empowering. These are levels and not stages - engagement continues at all of the levels throughout the engagement process.

iap2 public participation spectrum

developed by the international association for public participation

| | INFORM | CONSULT | INVOLVE | COLLABORATE | EMPOWER |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL | To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions. | To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision. | To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered. | To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. | To place final decision-making in the hands of the public. |
| PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC | We will keep you informed. | We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advise and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible. | We will implement what you decide. |
| EXAMPLE TOOLS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact sheets • Websites • Open houses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Deliberate polling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen Advisory committees • Consensus-building • Participatory decision-making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decisions |

2. Background

2.1. Democratic government is predicated on the fact that elected representatives have the freedom to act in the best interests of their electorates. Members are

elected on the basis of their political leaning and manifesto commitments – representative democracy. At Parish Council level elected members live in the communities they represent and are able to have a clearer view of what residents want. There is therefore greater opportunity for residents to influence local decision making by engaging with their councillors – participative democracy. But, for this to be truly effective, there need to be mechanisms for the two way flow of information and that is why we are producing this engagement strategy.

3. Strategy

3.1. Informing

- 3.2. The PC will ensure that information concerning the working of the council is made available to all.
- 3.3. Details of all PC meetings will be available on the website.
- 3.4. The PC will produce a quarterly newsletter that will be delivered to all addresses in the parish.
- 3.5. Members will be available to discuss issues during the hour preceding PC meetings
- 3.6. The FaceBook group Hatt Chat and Botus Banter will be used to disseminate news about PC activity.

3.7. Consulting

- 3.8. While the preceding section refers to the giving of information, the Consultation process is about receiving the thoughts, views and ideas of the stakeholders. Some individuals will be well informed and keen to share their thoughts at the earliest opportunity. Others will be more difficult to engage.

3.9. How do we consult?

There is no single method of consulting that will reach 100% of the stakeholders. Options include;

- Councillors surgeries prior to the PC meetings
- Piggy-backing on other events such as The Big Event

- Specific consultation events
- Survey/questionnaire

3.10. Involving , co-opting and empowering

3.11. Once people have been made aware about the functions of the PC and have had opportunities to express their views they may feel inclined to become involved in PC activities such as sub-committees or other PC sponsored activities. Members will encourage this involvement.

3.12. The NDP committee membership, The Big Event Organising Committee and the Community Action Team are all examples of informed individuals coming forward to support, or take over, initiatives sponsored by the PC.

3.13. The ultimate indicator of the success of the engagement would be an increased number of parishioners coming forward to stand for election to the PC.

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