

## 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 advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
EXAMPLE TOOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact sheets</li> <li>• Websites</li> <li>• Open houses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public comment</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Public meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Deliberate polling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen Advisory committees</li> <li>• Consensus-building</li> <li>• Participatory decision-making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen juries</li> <li>• Ballots</li> <li>• Delegated decisions</li> </ul>

### 2. Background

2.1. Democratic government entitles elected representatives to 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. For this to be truly effective, there does need to be mechanisms for a two way flow of information and that is why the Council have produced this Community Engagement Strategy.

### **3. Strategy**

#### **3.1. Informing**

- 3.2. The Parish Council will ensure that information concerning the working of the Council is made available.
- 3.3. Details of all Parish Council meetings will be available on the website.
- 3.4. The Parish Council will produce a four monthly newsletter that will be delivered to all addresses in the Parish.
- 3.5. Members will be available to discuss issues for 30 minutes preceding each Parish Council meeting.
- 3.6. The FaceBook group Hatt Chat and Botus Banter will be used to disseminate news about Parish Council activities.

#### **3.7. Consulting**

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

#### **3.9. How do we consult?**

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

- Council surgeries prior to the Parish Council meetings
- Media through other events such as The Big Event.

## Botus Fleming Parish Council Engagement Strategy 201

- Specific consultation events
- Survey/questionnaire

3.10. Involvement , co-option and empowerment.

3.11. Once people have been made aware about the functions of the Parish Council and have had opportunities to express their views they may feel inclined to become involved in Council activities by becoming involved in sub-committees or other Council sponsored activities. Members 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 initiatives run by the Parish Council.

3.13. An indicator to the success of any engagement would be by way of an increased number of Parishioners coming forward to stand for election to the Parish Council.