

Stoke Mandeville Parish Council

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

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1. Introduction

As part of its work towards the achievement of quality status, Stoke Mandeville Parish Council has formalised its community engagement strategy, recognising the importance of reflecting the needs of its parishioners, its partners and the locality in decision making processes. We strongly believe that our residents should be involved in decisions affecting them and their neighbourhood and in shaping the future of their parish.

2. Aim

The aim of the strategy is to improve the way in which the Council informs and consults its residents and partners on important issues by

- sharing information
- collecting views and listening to them, and
- being inclusive and engaging with all of its residents and partners

3. Objectives

The specific objectives of this strategy are to:

- improve, plan and shape the future of the parish according to local needs and priorities
- improve the quality and delivery of services
- use engagement to inform decision making, ensuring decisions really do meet the needs of the parish
- be a stronger, more active and cohesive parish

4. How will this be achieved?

Community engagement will be achieved by communicating, consulting, supporting and working together with our residents and partners as follows:

a. Communication

Communicating with residents and partners of the parish will be achieved in ways including the following to ensure all sections of the community are reached:

The Stoke Mandeville Parish Magazine is delivered quarterly to every household in Stoke Mandeville, informing residents on important issues.

The parish council website contains a great deal of local information. Special events and important notices will continue to be added regularly. Council and committee meeting agendas are advertised as required under the Local Government Act 1972, including on the website, and minutes of meetings are included on the website within a week of being approved. Options for including other information sharing features (blogs etc) will be considered

Information leaflets and newsletters are produced as necessary to inform readers about the impact of significant national issues on our local community (e.g. HS2). These are posted on notice boards and are available at the Parish office. Where serious issues warrant it, copies are delivered to every household in the parish and partners. They will also be available for download from the website.

Meetings of the Council and its standing Committees are open to the public and include an opportunity for members of the parish to engage with councillors. All meetings include an adjournment for public participation.

b. Consultation

Consulting all parishioners on important issues is key to the strategy. It will ensure those most affected are able to put forward an opinion and given an opportunity to make a difference.

It may be necessary to establish a range of different engagement channels to ensure that consultations include all members of the parish by identifying the hard to reach groups such as youths, the elderly, the housebound, the disabled, ethnic minorities etc.

c. Support

Supporting local organisations and engaging with them will assist them in meeting their own aims and objectives.

Supporting local projects and participating in local events will raise the awareness of the Council and its aims and objectives.

Supporting members of the parish in shaping the future of their parish will bring about a more cohesive community.

d. Acting Together

Acting together with residents and partners in finding solutions to local problems will ensure they will be accepted and fit for purpose.

Acting together to carry out agreed action plans, will engage the community in working with the Council to enhance the environment and the quality of their lives.

Acting together in decision making and policy drafting will ensure they have a voice and can make a difference.

5. Measuring success

Success will be measured, depending on the issue, by, among other measures:

- predefined targets, including annual reviews of consultation outcomes,
- monitoring residents' participation in consultation processes
- increases in residents' and partners' involvement in local projects and events.

6. Strategy review

Annual reviews of the consultation processes and results will be used as a continual improvement process for changes or amendments to the strategy.

7. Action plan

Activity	Action	Comment
Ease distribution of materials from SMPC to residents	Develop a pyramid distribution system through residents and areas so that distribution to households is facilitated	
Complete the website development project and ensure that there is a plan for maintenance	Negotiate with new ISP and website developer. Consider nomination for website manager (unpaid!)	Access levels to the website could be a serious security issue and must be thoroughly researched.
Set up record of key consultations, methodologies and results	Review consultation outcomes annually to highlight any failings in the processes.	