



Oswestry Rural Parish Council

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Introduction

This policy is designed to demonstrate how the Parish Council will engage with the local community to ensure that Council activities are for the benefit of all those who live, work and visit the parish of Oswestry Rural. This can be best achieved through a two-way communication channel between the Council and the community it serves. The Council believes that more can be achieved through community engagement because it increases social capital by giving the local community a voice and helps develop trust between all stakeholders.

Community engagement will be achieved through the Council's aims and objectives.

Aims and Objectives

The Council **aims** to:

- Deliver local services cost effectively and efficiently through best value.
- Ensure that community development is driven by the local community and that it represents their needs and ambitions.
- Represent the views of the local community by working with them to improve the local environment and preserve its heritage.

The Council's **objectives** are to:

- Work closely with the local community by listening to their views, needs and aspirations and assist to bring these into fruition.
- Demonstrate openness, transparency and accountability in all Parish Council activities.
- Support the local economy.
- Work with partners and stakeholders to improve and enhance the local environment.
- Support the work of voluntary groups and organisations.
- Represent the views of local residents in response to local planning applications.
- Promote ethical and fair practices to promote harmony and social inclusion.
- Support efforts to sustain the social, environmental and economic capital within the parish.
- Ensure that Councillors and staff are sufficiently trained to deliver public services to the people served by the Parish Council.

Community Engagement

The Council's Action Plan is the principal channel for informing the local community about the Council's activities. This offers community members the opportunity to provide feedback as to whether the Council is meeting their needs.

The Council will engage with its local community by encouraging people to become actively involved in future plans that will impact on the social, economic and environmental capital of the parish.

When the community needs to be involved	How the Parish Council will involve the community	Channel of communication
Development plans for the future of the parish that will impact on the built environment	Provide details of future development plans and signpost stakeholders to the various channels of how to respond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parish Council website ● Twitter ● Parish Council newsletters/Annual Reports ● Parish Council meetings ● Email and letters ● Parish Council notice boards ● Local radio/newspapers ● Word of mouth
Plans that will impact on social well-being	Provide sufficient details of who may be affected and signpost stakeholders to the various channels of how to respond	
Plans that will impact on the economic environment		

The Parish Council as an Enabler

The Council endeavors to ensure that all stakeholders are engaged, including hard to reach groups and those that are disadvantaged.

The Council holds monthly Parish Council meetings to which members of the public are invited and encouraged to speak during the public participation session of each Council meeting. Their comments are recorded in the minutes and the Parish Council follows up their concerns in an effort to represent them with the aim of reaching an equitable outcome for all parties concerned. The Council also invites the local neighbourhood policing team to attend Council meetings where crime and safety issues are discussed and local intelligence exchanged, thus helping to improve social well-being.

Agendas for Council meetings are posted on the Council’s website along with supporting documents that help inform the decision-making process. This open and transparent approach provides opportunities for the local community to be fully informed and involved if they wish to comment or express their views on future decisions, especially in relation to development proposals. To this end agendas list sufficient details to inform which planning applications and consultation the Council will consider, including web links to further information.

The Council’s website includes a page that provides contact details for the Clerk and councillors so that members of the public can communicate with the Council either by email, telephone or via a website contact form.

The Council has several notice boards at strategic places throughout the parish which provide Parish Council contact details, agendas and community information. Community information is also posted on the Council’s website.

Parish councillors also represent the Council on various community groups thus offering the opportunity for councillors to feed back to the Council the activities that take place within the parish which enables the Council to provide grant funding where necessary to support the social environment.

The Council prides itself in representing the people it serves and will continue with its role to engage with the local community to ensure the parish of Oswestry Rural is a better place in which to live, work and visit.

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