

PAINSWICK PARISH COUNCIL – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY.

Community engagement refers to the process by which **community** benefit organisations and individuals build ongoing, permanent relationships for the purpose of applying a collective vision for the benefit of a **community**.

Community Engagement if done badly it can be a waste of time for everyone and have a negative effect on local people's appetite for participation. It can also destroy the trust and reputations of the organisations involved. Activities carried out without a commitment to respond to the findings or those designed to support a preordained result are meaningless and can have an equally negative outcome.

Painswick Parish Council aims to be pro-active to the needs of the local community and to involve its parishioners in the Council's decision-making about the issues which affect them including planning, delivery of services and the future of the area.

To achieve this, the Council will provide its parishioners with: -

- Relevant information about services, policies and decisions that might affect or interest them.
- Opportunities for them to have their say about decisions, services and plans through consultations, surveys and conversation opportunities to get involved.
- Give them a greater influence over decisions and delivery.

The Council will follow the principles set out below:-

- Be honest and open.
- Make clear the purpose.
- Rationalise the significance of the issues.
- Be clear about what can be influence.
- Use accurate and unbiased information.
- Set out priorities.
- Ensure fair and inclusive engagement.
- Enable and promote participation from all members of the community.

Working together

1. Share knowledge and information openly with parishioners and partner organisations, whilst respecting confidentiality.

2. Learn from past experience.
3. Promote contact with local people to better understand and engage with the community, and to improve the services it delivers.
4. Keep communication lines open.
5. Provide feedback and demonstrate the changes that are made as a result of engagement.
6. Don't see negative feedback as a criticism but as an opportunity to understand the other factors/ points of view.

Communication

1. Notice boards will be regularly updated. This will include copies of Agendas, Notices, Posters, Fliers and appropriate publications.
2. Website to be kept up to date, including details of Parish Council and Committee meeting.
3. Appropriate use of Social Media; with links to Twitter and Facebook from the Parish Council Website.
4. Community Links from the Parish Council website.
5. Updates to be included in the various village publications; for example, the Beacon and Village Voices.
6. Office open hours – welcoming residents, business representatives and working partnerships/agents.
7. Ensuring availability of documentation online and hardcopies (from the office).

Public Events

1. Encourage Working Parties/Public Forums
2. Encourage community led plans.
3. Hold exhibitions or workshops or general events.
4. Identify the wider community groups to ensure that they are included.
5. Ensure wide publication of events but also target relevant interested representatives.
6. Share options with other public or relevant stakeholders.