

Lidgate Parish Council

Community Engagement Strategy

1. Introduction

Lidgate Parish Council has developed a Community Engagement Strategy as it realises that the services it provides should reflect the needs of its parishioners and the locality. It acknowledges that residents must be have more influence over local services and be involved in decisions affecting them and their local area, and in the shaping the future of their parish.

2. Aims

The aim of the Community Engagement Strategy is to improve the way in which Lidgate Parish Council engages and consults its residents and partners on important issues to ensure that :-

- They are fully informed, consulted and involved.
- They are all included in the engagement process irrespective of their age.
- Their views are heard and used to develop, enhance and improve services, the environment and the quality of life for residents.

3. Objectives

- To engage people with local council members
- To inform local residents clearly and comprehensively about the range of services available.
- To consult with residents about their needs and aspirations for the area they live in, and the services they wish to receive.
- To improve the quality and delivery of services within the parish.
- To improve, plan and shape the future of the parish, according to local needs and priorities.
- To enhance the general well-being of the parish and its residents.
- To strengthen the capacity of local councillors to act as leaders of the community they represent.
- To help create a stronger, more active and cohesive parish.

4. How this will be achieved

Communicating with residents

This will be achieved in a number of ways, to ensure all sections of the community are reached.

- The Council's Annual Report, informs residents on important issues. It will be made available on the website, as well as via the village newsletter and notice board. Copies will also be available in the village hall and local public house.
- The parish website contains a vast amount of information about Lidgate Parish Council and other local government services
- Dates of meetings and are displayed on the website and notice board
- Minutes of meetings are displayed on the website and notice board within a month of every council or committee meeting.
- There is a comments form on the website to allow residents to communicate their views to the Council
- The Council regularly publishes information about the Council and local council services on the website or in the village newsletter which is delivered to every household.
- All Council and committee meetings are open to the public. There is a public forum at the start of each meeting to give residents an opportunity to talk to councillors about items on the agenda or any concerns they may have. Residents are welcome to stay and observe the rest of the meeting.
- As a small village councillors are well known and make themselves available informally to local residents.

Consulting with residents

One of the keys to a successful Community Engagement Strategy is consultation on important issues which affect residents. This will ensure those most affected are able to put forward their opinion, and

given the opportunity to contribute. The council is committed to ensuring that consultations include all members of the parish, by identifying hard to reach groups, such as the young, the elderly, the housebound or disabled, ethnic minorities, etc.

Supporting residents

The Council recognises the need to support local projects and organisations as this will help raise the awareness of the Council and its aims and objectives.

Working together with residents

By working together with residents and partners, it should be possible to find solutions to local problems, which will be accepted and fit for purpose. Working together to carry out agreed action plans should engage the community in working with the Council, to enhance their environment and the quality of their lives. Working together on decision making and policy drafting should ensure that residents feel they have a voice and can make a real difference.

6. How can the success of this strategy be measured?

Specific performance measures may include:

- People feeling that they are kept well informed by the Council
- People feeling that the Council listens to their views, and acts on their concerns
- People feeling that complaints are handled well
- People feeling that the Council is trustworthy
- People feeling that Council involves them in making decisions about future priorities
- People feeling that they have opportunities to participate with the council, and can influence the decision-making process
- People feeling that they wish to be more involved in decision-making
- People being satisfied with the way the Council runs things, and with particular services provided by the Council
- People feeling that the council provides value for money
- People exercising their right to vote at local elections

This information could be obtained through a questionnaire delivered to individual households.

7. Strategy Reviews

This Strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure that the aims and objectives are being met.

This Community Engagement Strategy was adopted by Lidgate Parish Council at the meeting on Thursday 17th September 2009.

Signed:(Chairman)

Dated: