



- This document sets out Tedburn St Mary Parish Council's approved and agreed practices. Any deviation must be made by resolution of the full Council and recorded below.
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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Community engagement is the process by which the public bodies, parishioners, clubs, organisations and businesses build ongoing, permanent relationships for the benefit of a community to which they belong due to their proximity and shared governance.

Tedburn St Mary Parish Council aims to reach out to its parishioners with the emphasis on receiving rather than transmitting. Historically, the council met its communications responsibilities by publishing its agendas, minutes, statutory documents and policies.

This policy provides the framework for the council to share:-

relevant information about services, policies and decisions that might affect or interest residents.

opportunities for parishioners to have their say about decisions, services and plans through consultations, surveys and conversation opportunities to get involved.

The Council will aim to:-

- be honest and open
- be clear in purpose
- be accurate and unbiased
- be fair and inclusive engagement
- enable and promote participation from all members of the community
- share knowledge and information openly with parishioners and partner organisations whilst respecting confidentiality



- promote contact with local people to understand and engage with the community and to improve the services it delivers
- provide feedback and demonstrate the changes that are made as a result of engagement

The Parish Council is strengthening its links with the community by the introduction of communications channels that increase the opportunity for parishioners to contact the council by introducing a range of opportunities to connect with the council by making contact easier and more accessible across the wide range of media available today as well as introducing regular opportunities for residents to speak with the council one to one and face to face.

To achieve this, the Council offers

A weekly 'Open Forum' – the clerk is available one morning for three hours once a week, plus two further hours once a month in the evening. These sessions alternate between the two villages halls, one in Tedburn St Mary village centre and the other at Pathfinder Village (an 'over 55) static home park with 400 residents. This is widely publicised on the village website, the parish council website, the Tedburn Community FaceBook page (using the parish council FB), noticeboards and the village newsletter. Residents can raise any issue they wish to discuss, either with the clerk who can take it to the council.

Face to face appointments with any councillor are offered via a booking service with the clerk. Some councillors have special responsibilities and if any parishioner wishes to discuss an issue an appointment will be made at the Open Forum

Open Forum at parish council meetings, as a legislative requirement at all parish council meetings.

Regular items in the village newsletter with over 400 subscriptions/buyers as well as regularly printing the minutes and reports.

Consultation sessions – if there is a controversial or far-reaching project affecting the village the council is committed to holding consultation sessions, open to all residents, to gather information.

Open meetings. The council makes it clear in all its communications that it is open to requests for the parish council to hold public meetings in order to gauge and record public opinion about anything affecting the village that the public feel strongly should be addressed. Action groups. If the consultation sessions prove there is a case to be addressed the parish council will support the setting up of action groups with advice on funding, influencing stakeholders, meetings, agendas, minutes, publicity, etc.

Village website. The council has relaunched the village website to make access easier and a volunteer is acting as editor and developed an easy access approach for clubs, groups, individuals to use the site to publicise events, seek help, provide information and contact details for any activity or organisation that wishes to publicly engage with parishioners, such



as the Drama Group, Badminton Club, Farmers' Market, Pre-school nursery, Post Office and the many other groups and associations in the village.

Parish Council website. The council has launched its own website, publishing agendas, minutes, financial information, policies and plans. The site also fulfils the legal requirement to file council documents and, in line with all public bodies, meets Accessibility criteria as required by the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

Notice boards regularly display all agenda and minutes and notices from other organisations relevant to the area.

Social media. All Tedburn St Mary social media posts and responses will be done via the Tedburn St Mary Community Hub in order not to fragment the social media information source.

Parish Council stall at local Farmers' Market. The parish council has a stall at the monthly farmers' market. This is a popular event where the councillors get to meet many of the younger families in the village who are at work during the day and have busy family lives that preclude them from engaging with the parish council in a meaningful way due to pressure on time and resources.

The clerk's contact details and hours of work clearly displayed on all available communication channels, with a commitment, to return calls and email within two working days, usually sooner.