

Engagement Policy

Hound Parish Council has developed this document to describe how it aims to engage with residents and the community. It is intended to provide a framework of best practice; to draw together activities and practices which have been developed over the years to produce a closer working relationship with the community it represents. The Council recognises that engagement is a two-way process between itself and its residents.

This document is not intended to become a static document but one which will evolve over time reflecting the changes in the community of Hound. It is therefore essential that this strategy is subject to review and change at regular intervals.

Aims – Inform, Consult & Involve

The aim of the Council's Engagement Strategy is to continuously improve the way in which the Parish Council engages and consults with the community and key partners.

To this end all residents should be:

- Informed of the council's activities and projects
- Consulted on council's activities and projects
- Have the opportunity to be involved in the Council's activities and projects

This will result in the views/opinions of the community becoming an integral part of the Parish Council's decision-making process, improving the services provided by the Council and ensuring the Council better reflects the community it represents.

Objective

- Use consultation to improve the services the Council delivers, to ensure these services reflect the community's needs and aspirations.

Strategy – Communication & Consultation

Hound Parish Council will achieve its objective through the following means:

1. Communication

The Parish Council recognises the need to use different methods of communication to reach all sections of the community and each method used will include details of how the public can contact the Council.

Website - www.houndparishcouncil.gov.uk - The Website will be used to provide information about the Council's activities including meeting agendas and minutes as well as information about other organisations in the area.

Notice Boards - Information about meetings and agendas will be provided on the Council's Notice Boards in the following locations:

- Queen's View (on the green by Richard's & Lisa's shop)
- Abbey Hall (on the side of the building by the changing room door)
- Ingleside (by the bus stop)
- Butlocks Heath (on the village green on Woolston Road)
- Outside the main gate of the school
- Hound Burial Ground (outside the entrance gate)

Newsletters - The Council produces the NewsHound which is delivered to every house in the parish. We also look to place important information into the Scene magazine.

Social Media - The Council has active Facebook and Twitter accounts which are used to post messages that are important and information for Council and Committee meetings. The Council also have their own YouTube page which is used to 'Live Stream' the Council and Planning Committee meetings.

Meetings - The Council's meetings will be advertised on the Council's notice boards, the parish office window and on our Facebook and Twitter pages. Meetings are open to the public and include an opportunity for the public to speak as part of the meeting.

Councillors - The Councillors are well known members of the community and are easily accessible to those residents who wish to contact them. Many are also members of other organisations within the community which provide valuable opportunities for them to learn about the needs and aspirations of the area as well as to tell residents what the Council are doing.

2. Consultation

The Council will consult residents, both formally and informally, at every opportunity when making important decisions.

It is also open to receiving representations from members of the public, through telephone calls and emails to the Clerk and individual Councillors.

The Parish Council will also seek to consult with all sections of the community including the traditionally hard to reach sections of the community.

Parish Council Meetings - Parish Councillors will take into consideration matters raised by residents during the Public Forum part of its Parish Council meetings.

Questionnaires - The Council will seek the views of the residents on significant changes or improvements in the parish through the use of questionnaires. Depending on the subject of the consultation, Councillors may have such questionnaires delivered to each household, made available in the village shops and/or run a consultation event at Abbey Hall, Hound Parish Hall or both halls.

Partnership Working - To achieve the Council's objectives, it is essential for the Council/Councillors to support other groups, organisations and individuals within the community to achieve their aspirations. It is also important that the Council works with other authorities providing services within the area including the principle authority, Eastleigh Borough and Hampshire County Councils and the Police. The Council will endeavour to take part in consultation exercises undertaken by the authorities and other bodies that provide services to its residents.

Managing Expectations - The Council is aware that increased communications with residents could result in an increased workload and it is therefore important to manage both the increased workload and resident's expectations.

Council Response Times - The Council will respond to all communications requiring a reply whether by telephone, email or postal letter within 5 working days of receipt of the communication. The reply will include the requested information or information regarding actions being taken where appropriate.

Managing Success of the Strategy - For the strategy to be effective it must be reviewed in terms of appropriateness and relevance to the changing community in Hound but also in terms of how effective it has been.

This can be achieved through monitoring a number of different aspects of the Council's activities:

- Responses to council consultations
- Residents contact with clerk and councillors
- Residents attendance at council meetings

Review of Strategy - The success of the strategy will be reviewed annually.

Appendix

Step Process for Communication

1. The Parish Website
2. The Parish Office Window and the Parish Website
3. The Parish Office Window, the Parish Website and Parish Notice boards
4. The Parish Office Window, the Parish Website, Parish Notice boards and the Parish Social Media channels
5. A YouTube video message
6. The Parish Newsletter
7. A public engagement meeting(s)