

Wigginton & Hopwas Parish Council

Community Engagement Policy

Introduction

Wigginton & Hopwas Parish Council recognises the importance of local people, community groups and businesses having a voice in contributing to the debate and decisions on issues faced by the Parish Council.

Within our Parish Council Action Plan are four goals & actions relating to Community Engagement:

Community Engagement	
Support and promote groups and organisations within the Parish	Councillors where possible to attend organised events. To promote organised events through the website and social media
To encourage County and District Councillor participation within the Parish	Invite District and County Councillors to parish council meetings and encourage participation at meetings
Maintain and update village notice boards	Ensure that village notice boards are maintained and that literature displayed is current, relevant and well presented. Ensure that Council meeting agenda's, minutes and other required notices, are displayed at appropriate dates and for appropriate periods.
Website, social media	Encourage dialogue with residents and encourage participation at council meetings

This Policy is intended to support our goals and highlight our commitment to them.

Aims and Objectives

The Council's aims and objectives for seeking community engagement and the outcomes it hopes to achieve are:

Aims

- To foster closer working relationships with residents, businesses and community groups;
- To engage with as many people as possible who want to participate in decision-making, monitoring services and planning for the future;
- To enhance local democracy by getting closer to the community and being accessible to all;

- To actively encourage the involvement of residents through the use of a wide range of approaches to public involvement, to capture their views, learn their concerns and effectively use those views as an integral part of the decision-making process;
- Ensure that residents have the opportunities to be heard at every stage, and the capacity to be effective citizens.

Objectives:

This policy is part of the council's commitment to creating and maintaining effective working relationships with all sectors of the community, based on trust, openness and constructive challenge.

Outcomes

The outcomes which we are striving for and against which the success of this policy will be measured are:

- Improved communication through the establishment of new channels of engagement.
- More residents understanding the role and responsibilities of Councillors and the Council.
- Improved engagement with local communities, with more people feeling that they are involved in decision- making and a higher percentage of people involved in volunteering.
- Improved satisfaction with services provided by the Council.

Defining the community

Wigginton & Hopwas Parish is situated within Lichfield District, in Staffordshire. The Parish contains three villages, Wigginton, Hopwas and Comberford.

There are 269 residencies in Hopwas, 337 residencies in Wigginton and 40 residencies in Comberford¹. There are approximately 1924 parish residents² and 1204 electors³. The principal councils are Lichfield District Council and Staffordshire County Council.

The community may be defined as consisting of residents of the parish; and

- Young people who live and/or go to school within the parish,
- The Head Teachers, Staff and Governors of Thomas Barnes County Primary School, Hopwas; St Leonard's Church of England School, Wigginton and The Rawlett School, Comberford Road
- Retail and other businesses in the community, including employees and customers
- Visitors to Hopwas Playing Field and Comberford Millennium Green
- Interest groups – clubs and societies e.g. Bowls, History etc

¹ Electoral Roll at 1st October 2023

² ONS Census Statistics 2021

³ Electoral Roll at 1st October 2023



- Voluntary organisations, such as Hopwas Gardening Club, Hopwas WI & Wigginton Mother's Union
- Church Groups
- Farming Community
- Groups of people defined by a common factor e.g. age, disability, faith etc.
- Councillors and public service representatives including Council Staff & Contractors

Role of council members and officers

The Parish Council is not party-political with 7 Councillors identified in the community, via the noticeboard, newsletters, the website and social media.

Council members communicate with the public via their attendance at council & committee meetings, through their casework, by attending public meetings and organisations within the Parish, and by seeking opinions.

There is one officer of the Council, (the Clerk/RFO) who covers the entire spectrum of the council's work, being based at home. Members of the public are welcome to make appointments at mutually convenient times and places to meet with the Clerk. The officer is frequently dealing with meetings or in contact via email, telephone and traditional mail.

The Parish Council supported the development of the Neighbourhood Plan to give the community the greatest possible say in its future.

Provision of information to the community

- Queries or concerns can be made at any day and any time via email and phone calls will be answered during reasonable working hours.
- The names and emails of all Councillors are published on the website, on the noticeboards and in newsletters
- The Parish Council website address is widely published and the site contains all the information an individual might wish to know about the work of the Parish Council and its individuals, including meeting agendas, minutes and associated paperwork, policy documents, accounts and how to contact anyone associated with the Council.
- The Parish Council currently use Facebook and Twitter to share news and information from the website in order to reach people who find this more convenient and connect with a younger demographic.
- The Council have previously produced newsletters delivered to every household in the parish and intend to publish newsletters on a more regular basis in future.
- Information, such as agendas of meetings, are published on three notice boards around the parish and on the website.
- The District Ward Councillors & County Councillor are invited to attend every Council meeting
- Members of the public and the press are welcome to attend every meeting of the Council.



- An Annual Report is usually prepared and published on the website & printed in the newsletter.

Opportunities for Community Involvement

It is recognised that members of the community may wish to engage with the Council at different levels – from an ad-hoc email or letter with a suggestion on how a service could be improved, to regular attendance at Council meetings.

The Council's meetings are of course open to the public and public participation is facilitated at each public meeting, which is defined within the Standing Orders and regularly publicised.

- The Council may appoint non councillors on to appropriate working groups when they have a particular interest or expertise.
- An Annual Parish Meeting is held each year (with the exception of 2020-22 due to the pandemic), giving the public and local organisations an opportunity to participate in the full meeting. In future the Council will ensure that the Annual Parish Meeting is advertised widely, and that Community Groups are actively encouraged to attend and report on their activities throughout the year. The Council shall also report on the work carried out during the year and ensure it is used as an opportunity for the Council to obtain the views of residents and community groups on any matter which affects the community.
- The council will undertake consultations by website surveys and questionnaires, focus groups and public meetings as appropriate, for specific issues
- The council will consider inviting any local School Council's to a Council meeting and put on a role play council, to ensure that pupils understand how local democracy works and allow local children to get the opportunity to engage with local issues.
- The Council will continue to consider practical ways of engaging with people and community groups.
- The Council will continue to arrange, support and participate in community events.

Involvement with partnerships

The council has a representative on the following Committees and Trusts:

- Hints Quarry Liaison Committee

The Council will consider engaging with more community groups and committees and aim to have representatives within further interest groups, societies and committees

Contact the Parish Council:

The council and members may be contacted through the Parish Clerk,

Mrs Kate Pritchard, 48 Hints Road, Hopwas, Tamworth, Staffordshire, B78 3AA

Mobile: 07540 991 343

Email: clerk@wiggintonandhopwas-pc.gov.uk