

Whittington Parish Council

Communication and Community Engagement Strategy

Introduction

As representatives of the community, the Parish Council wants to improve the quality and range of local services in the Parish. We are, therefore, committed to becoming actively involved in all parts of our community by working closely with voluntary and community groups so that we can identify their needs. We shall do this by working in partnership with our local authority and other agencies.

Whittington Parish Council is committed to engaging residents by encouraging them to become actively involved in decisions that affect them and the community, and to facilitate the delivery of better services by creating a more active and informed community.

This document serves as a supplementary document to the Parish Council's Project Plan.

Aims and Objectives

Whittington Parish Council recognises that the service it provides must reflect the needs of residents and the locality. As a council, it wants to ensure that communication is two-way – telling people about the council and listening to what people say about the service they would like to see.

Objectives

- To raise awareness of the Council and keep people informed of its priorities, activities, aims and objectives.
- To understand the demographic of the people who live in the Parish and apply different engagement and communication methodologies that are inclusive and successfully connect, inform and support the delivery of Whittington Parish Council's Parish Plan and aligned activities and initiatives.
- To build the capacity and motivation of residents and partners to be involved with parish council initiatives and planning.

- To ensure the Parish Council is aware of and timely responds to what the people of Whittington Parish want and need to know.
 - To work collaboratively with all media, to ensure the accurate presentation of our proposals and responses.
 - To build trust by being open and transparent.
 - To ensure our messages are relevant, clear and factual to ensure maximum impact and interaction between the Parish Council and our community.
 - To provide a user friendly website (that complies with the Website Accessibility Regulations) to drive interaction with our audiences.
 - To celebrate success and generate interest in the Parish.
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Our Stakeholders

Our stakeholders include anyone who could be affected by or who is interested in the activities of the Parish Council. This includes but is not limited to:

- Parishioners
 - People visiting the Parish
 - Local Authorities
 - Neighbouring Parish Councils and residents
 - Emergency Services
 - Parish Organisations and Businesses
 - The School, Church and Castle
 - Organisations such as Star Housing
 - Community Groups such as Whittington Together
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Key Methods of Communication and Engagement

Communication – Conveying information or a message to a stakeholder

Engagement – The active participation of stakeholders in the decisions that affect them

The Parish Council aims to achieve their Communication and Engagement Objectives by using the following tools and methods:

Parish Council Website – www.whittingtonpc.com

- Making information available on what decisions are being considered and how residents can give their opinions. Agendas and minutes are posted on the parish council website.
- The news section of the Parish Council website is used to share useful information and there is a ‘useful information’ section on the website with contact details for the police and links to local organisations.
- Contact details for every councillor are published on the website (phone numbers) and the Clerk’s details are published to allow people to contact the Council via phone, email or letter.

Meetings

- Parish Council meetings are open to members of the public and a time is set aside prior to the meeting for residents to make comments or to ask questions.
- The Annual Parish Meeting is used for obtaining the views of residents on matters affecting the community. Notice of the Annual Parish Meeting is posted on the notice boards and on the website.
- Residents can submit items which they wish to be raised at a Council meeting, or to give their view on a particular topic, to the Clerk (please refer to the Parish Council’s Standing Orders).
- Where assistance has been requested and it is not a matter that is dealt with by the Parish Council, where appropriate, the Clerk will assist to ensure that residents are referred to the correct department of Shropshire Council or other relevant authority or organisation.
- When dealing with other authorities or organisations regarding issues affecting the community, the Parish Council will ensure that the opinions of the members of the community are made known.

Parish Magazine

- A short article summarising recent agenda items is published in the Ripple Magazine.

Social Media

- Information is shared on the Parish Council's Facebook Page (please refer to the Parish Council's Press and Media Policy)

Noticeboards

- Copies of forthcoming agendas (meeting notices) are published on the parish council noticeboards 3 clear days before a meeting.
- Contact details for the Clerk can be found on the noticeboard.
- Annual Financial information (The Annual Return) is published on the noticeboards.
- A file has now been placed in the Senior Citizens Hall, to provide hard copies of meeting minutes and agendas. However, use of this is currently on hold due to Covid-19.

Consultations / Public Meetings / Surveys / Events

- Flyers advertising major events such as the Annual Parish Meeting or Special Public Meetings are displayed on parish noticeboards on the website, on Social Media and at key locations in the parish.
 - Copies of the Parish Plan are available to everyone in the parish (hard copies are available and a copy is published on the Parish Council website) and members of the community will be encouraged to become actively involved in addressing the issues which have been highlighted in the Plan.
 - The Parish Council will participate in, community activities and events, to ensure that the community become more aware of who their councillors are and what the Parish Council does.
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Communication and Engagement Action Plan 2020-21

	What is needed?	Why?	How?	Priority / When to action	Who is responsible	Costs / Resources	Progress
1	The website needs to have an accessibility statement published	Legislation	Write a statement and publish on the website	Sept 2020	Clerk	£0	Completed
2	More information on the website about the role of the Parish Council and what being a Councillor involves	To better inform stakeholders about the activities of a Parish Council To raise the profile of the PC To inform people who may be interested in being a councillor (2021 elections)	Create a new page and enhance the information already published. Create a new page specifically to provide information on the 2021 elections.	By January 2021	Clerk	£0	Completed
3	Consultation with stakeholders regarding future major projects in the parish	The parish council has substantial funds available through the Neighbourhood Fund. The Parish Council needs to obtain stakeholders views.	Facebook Ripple Noticeboards Website Consultation Forms hand delivered or available to pick up from central points			Cost if hard copies of consultation forms are printed and delivered door to door	

4	Consultation / sharing of information with people in a non-digital way	Not everyone is on the internet	Better use of the Ripple Could we have a dedicated page to share more information? Focus Groups Public Meetings	Public Meetings / drops ins can only resume once safe (covid 19)			
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The Communication and Community Engagement Strategy will be reviewed annually (in conjunction with the Parish Council Action / Project Plan)