

## **Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural Parish Council Community Engagement Policy**

### **Introduction**

Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural Parish Council is committed to engaging residents by encouraging them to become actively involved in decisions that affect them and the community, to delivering better services and to improving quality of life of residents by creating a more active and informed community.

### **Aims**

The aim of this strategy is to:

- ❖ Improve the way in which the Parish Council communicates with members of the community.
- ❖ Work closely with residents, businesses, and community groups.
- ❖ Listen to the views of residents on important issues.
- ❖ Use these views to deliver better services.
- ❖ Ensure that local democracy is enhanced by getting closer to the local community.
- ❖ Ensure that residents have the opportunity to be heard at every stage.
- ❖ Improve the long term social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of residents.
- ❖ Plan future development of the parish in accordance with the needs and priorities of the community.

### **Objectives**

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

Outcomes of the strategy will include:

- ❖ Improved communication through the establishment of new channels of engagement.
- ❖ Residents understanding the role of a Parish Councillor to get the best effect.

- ❖ Improved engagement with local community groups, with more people feeling that they are involved in decision making and a higher percentage of people involved in volunteering.
- ❖ To work in partnership with other organisations to deliver improved services.
- ❖ To use a variety of methods to make information available including social media.
- ❖ To actively facilitate and encourage community engagement.
- ❖ To proactively engage with all sections of the community.
- ❖ To ensure that decisions meet the needs of the community by involving members of the community in the decision-making process

### **Communicating with the community**

Information will be made available in a variety of ways to ensure that all sections of the community are reached.

- ❖ Messages can be left at any time via the clerk's telephone or email.
- ❖ The names of all Parish Councillors are published on the website.
- ❖ The Parish Council website contains all information an individual might wish to know about the work of the Parish Council, including minutes from previous meetings, policy documents, financial statements, and contact details for the Parish Council.
- ❖ Information such as agendas for Parish Council meetings are published on the Parish Council notice boards and on the website.
- ❖ The Essex County Councillor and Braintree District Councillors along with members of the press and public are invited to attend all meetings of the Parish Council.
- ❖ Documents will use plain English.

### **Opportunities for Community Involvement**

- ❖ Members of the community may wish to engage with the Parish Council at different levels, from an email or letter with a suggestion on how a service can be improved, to regular attendance to a Parish Council meeting.
- ❖ Parish Council meetings are open to members of the public and there is a public participation session during each Parish Council meeting.

- ❖ An Annual Parish Meeting is held in May of each year, giving the public and local organisations an opportunity to participate in the full meeting. This meeting is advertised widely and is used by the Parish Council to report on the work carried out during the year. It is also an opportunity for views to be sought from the residents on any matter that affects the community.
- ❖ The Parish Council undertakes consultations by questionnaire, public meetings as appropriate, for specific issues.
- ❖ The Parish Council is always considering practical ways of engaging with people and community groups.
- ❖ The Parish Council will continue to support and participate in community events.

### **Involvement with partnerships**

The Parish Council has a representative on the following:

- ❖ Greenstead Green Village Hall Committee
- ❖ Braintree Association of Local Councils.
- ❖ Greenwatch
- ❖ Earls Colne Airfield Liaison Committee

Chairman...P. Foster.....

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