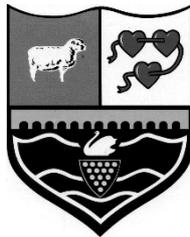


WADEBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Adopted at the meeting of Full Council on 8 June 2016

Minute Reference: 076/16

Policy Review Date: June 2018

WADEBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Wadebridge Town Council has developed a Community Engagement Strategy which aims to set a standard for engagement with residents, communities, businesses and voluntary organisations.
- 1.2 The Council recognises that it must provide services which reflect the needs of its residents and which endeavour to improve the quality of life. It aims to give local people a voice in the process of taking decisions which affect the community.
- 1.3 The Council aims to engage with its residents and encourage their participation in decision making, securing better services, being engaged with the local democratic process and creating a more active and informed community.

2 AIMS

- 2.1 To work more closely with residents, community groups and businesses.
- 2.2 To be inclusive in engaging with as many people as possible.
- 2.3 To actively encourage residents' involvement.
- 2.4 To listen to views and have regard to them in enhancing services.
- 2.5 To raise the profile of the Town Council.

3 OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 To encourage effective local community engagement.
- 3.2 Ensure that embedded throughout the Council there is a clear understanding of the need to engage with communities about decisions which affect them.
- 3.3 Adopt modes of communication which enables as many people as possible to be reached.
- 3.4 Enable the aspirations/comments/suggestions etc. obtained from community engagement to have an impact on decision making and the way in which services are being delivered.
- 3.5 To inform residents of the role of Town Councillors.
- 3.6 To enhance the well- being of the town.

4 ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

- The Town Council cannot force any individual or group to become involved but it can, and will, make it easier and more attractive to do so.
- The Council will always be clear, before the start of any participation or consultation event, to what extent the result will inform a decision.
- If the outcome of a participation or consultation event is intended to inform a decision and a different decision is taken, the reasoning behind that decision will be clear and published.

- All involvement will be time-bound and aggregated results will be published openly.
- Not every decision requires community involvement.
- Consultations will be targeted at the relevant group or groups.
- If an event calls for wider public involvement the event will be advertised locally allowing people time to organise their engagement with the event.
- Specific, non-leading questions will be asked. Questions can be open (e.g. where do you think swings should be sited?) but not open-ended (e.g. what do you think should be done?).
- Care will be taken to ensure that no one voice is given greater weight than any other.

5 CURRENT METHODS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

5.1 Communication

- ❖ The Town Council Website will be updated regularly and will contain Agendas, Minutes, Council information documents and other information as required.
- ❖ Meeting minutes and reports are available in both hard copy and electronically for residents and community groups, including copies lodged with the Library.
- ❖ Information leaflets will be produced as required and will be available locally.
- ❖ Meetings are publicised and open to the public with an opportunity for residents to bring items to the council's attention.
- ❖ The Annual Town Meeting is an opportunity for residents to discuss issues and inform the Town Council of needs.
- ❖ The annual External Audit provides the opportunity for questions to be asked about the latest Statement of Accounts (are available as printed copies and on the website).
- ❖ Surgeries are held at regular intervals by the Mayor and are advertised on Town noticeboards and on the website.

5.2 Consultation

- ❖ Consultation on important issues will be key in obtaining precise information and views and will be undertaken by questionnaires, use of the website and by approaching local organisations.
- ❖ Consultation will be as inclusive as possible and will seek to consult everyone including minority and hard to reach groups .

5.3 Support

- ❖ To support local organisations and engage with them in meeting their own targets and aims.
- ❖ To support local projects and participate in local events to raise awareness of the Town Council and its aims.

5.4 **Partnership**

- ❖ Partnership with local organisations will ensure appropriate and acceptable outcomes.
- ❖ Partnership will further the aims of the council to improve the environment and the quality of life for all residents.
- ❖ Partnership will raise the profile of the Town Council and its work.
- ❖ Partnership with Cornwall Council and surrounding local councils will enhance the service the Town Council is able to provide.
- ❖ Some Members and officers act as representatives for Outside Bodies comprising community groups, local organisations, and other government agencies, and regularly attend their meetings.
- ❖ Unlike other tiers of local government, Town Councillors always live within 3 miles of the town they serve and therefore have close ties to their constituents and local voluntary and community organisations on a day-to-day basis, making them uniquely placed in terms of informed representation.

6 **THE COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- 6.1 Wadebridge Town Council is committed in its vision to provide a democratic representational voice for the people of Wadebridge. Central to this ethos is engagement with the local community in a proactive and meaningful way, as embodied in the Council's Mission Statement.

WADEBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL - MISSION STATEMENT

Wadebridge Town Council aims to improve the quality of life for the residents of Wadebridge. To this end, we pledge to:

- Provide high standard and cost-effective services to help meet the needs and wishes of local residents;
- **Engage in open dialogue with residents to understand their needs and together, work out how we can address those needs within the resources and powers available to the Town Council.**
- Actively pursue a representational role.
- Assist, encourage and empower groups and individuals to address local needs.
- Promote the best interest of the town for the betterment of the local and greater community
- **Work together with all sections of the community**
- Engage in the protection of the environment within the means of the Council.

7 FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

7.1 Wadebridge Town Council is committed to improving community engagement by abiding by the engagement principles and:

- ❖ Improving relationships with community groups and developing measures to harness the views and opinions of people and groups who are often missed out of community engagement activities.
- ❖ Identifying and embracing opportunities to work with other local community groups, as and when the need arises.
- ❖ Extending and developing the range of electronic communication including a presence on social networking media such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn etc.
- ❖ Participating in local networks to share knowledge and experience of community engagement activities in other areas.
- ❖ Publicising the positive results that have been achieved from working relationships between the Council and other community groups; in order to encourage new relationships to be formed and raise community spirit.
- ❖ Ensuring that appropriate evaluation is carried out following consultation exercises to ensure that lessons learned are carried forward and an assessment of how effective and useful the consultation was.