

UPPER BEEDING PARISH COUNCIL

Engagement and Communication Policy

INTRODUCTION

Why do we need a Policy?

- The Parish Council feel/believe/suspect the local community is insufficiently engaged/interested in local Parish Council activities.
- People (voters) in the Parish do not understand what we do/can and cannot achieve. They therefore see us as a talking shop with no power.
- Local Government nowadays is required to be increasingly focused on reputation, bringing improvements to the local community and recognition and respect. REPUTATION IS IMPORTANT.
- The Parish Council needs to continuously improve the way we involve and engage the local community in achieving the aims, objectives, and purposes of UBPC
- So, this is not just about communication.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Aims

The aim of the Community Engagement and Communications Strategy is to improve the way in which Upper Beeding Parish Council engages, involves and consults its residents and partners and stakeholders (see appendix B) on important issues to ensure that:

- They are fully informed, consulted and involved.
- They are all included in the engagement process irrespective of their age.
- Their views are heard and used to develop, enhance and improve services, the environment and the quality of life for residents
- They understand and actively support the responsibilities, actions and policies of UBPC and its relationship with Horsham District Council and West Sussex County Council.

Objectives

- To engage local people and voters with local council members
- To inform local residents clearly and comprehensively about the range of services available.
- To consult with residents about their needs and aspirations for the area they live in, and the services they wish to receive.
- To improve the quality and delivery of services within the parish.
- To improve, plan and shape the future of the parish, according to local needs and priorities.
- To enhance the general well-being of the parish and its residents.
- To strengthen the capacity of local councillors to act as leaders of the community they represent.
- To help create a stronger, more active and cohesive parish.

PROPOSED STRATEGY

Introduction

The strategy should focus on the following:-

- Information and Education on the responsibilities powers and limitations of Parish Councils and particularly UBPC.
- Improving Communication to all stake holders but particularly residents.
- Improving Consultation with residents/giving people a voice.
- Supporting the local community.
- Promotion of UBPC events to engage and involve the community.

Information and Education on the roles of local government

- Publish on the web site and in a newsletter the role and responsibilities of the different tiers of local government in West Sussex (see Appendix A)

Communication with residents

This will be achieved in a number of ways, to ensure all sections of the community are reached.

- The Council's Annual Report will inform residents on important issues. It will be made available on the website, as well as via the village newsletter and notice board. Copies will also be available in the village hall and local public house.
- The parish website will contain a vast amount of information about Upper Beeding Parish Council and other local government services including a comprehensive summary of facilities and organisations in the area.
- The website will comply with accessibility regulations making it available to all.
- Dates of meetings and are displayed on the website and notice boards.
- Agendas are published on the website and notice boards at least 3 clear days ahead of a meeting.
- Minutes of meetings are displayed on the website.
- There should be a comments form on the website to allow residents to communicate their views to the Council.
- The Council should regularly publish information about the Council and local council services on the website, Facebook and noticeboards and in the village newsletter which is delivered to every household.
- All Council and committee meetings are open to the public. There is a public forum at the start of each meeting to give residents an opportunity to talk to councillors about items on the agenda or any concerns they may have. Residents are welcome to stay and observe the rest of the meeting.
- Increase our presence on social networking sites where appropriate.

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Improving Consultation with residents

One of the keys to a successful Community Engagement Strategy is consultation on important issues which affect residents. This will ensure those most affected are able to put forward their opinion and given the opportunity to contribute.

- The council is committed to ensuring that consultations include all members of the parish, by identifying hard to reach groups, such as the young, the elderly, the housebound or disabled, ethnic minorities, etc.
- The council will hold an a regular survey to enquire what are residents' priorities/needs/expectations of UBPC for the coming period and where if any are the gaps in services/expectations. (this should be both in paper and online) (appendix "A" could be attached.)
- The council will conduct consultation surveys on all major issues that arise which may affect the environment in the parish
 - Neighbourhood plan
 - Major Planning Applications
 - Major Changes in services
 - Major investments in recreational and sports facilities.

Supporting and Working with the Local Community

- Identify key groups/voluntary organisations in the area who will benefit from our support(e.g. Hub, Societies, Support Groups, Schools, Churches, Sports.

Other Potential PR Exercises to be considered.

- Sponsor/promote/support/ family events.
 - Firework displays
 - Family Picnic/Barbecue/Games Day
 - Family Sports/competition events
 - Music Events
 - Health/Well-being events
 - Becoming a dementia friendly council / community
- Establish annual Awards event for contribution to the village
- Annual Fair
- Sponsored charity events
- Events in association with South Downs National Park

MEASURING SUCCESS

Specific performance measures may include:

- People feeling that they are kept well informed by the Council.
- People feeling that the Council listens to their views, and acts on their concerns.
- People feeling that complaints are handled well.

The Gladys Bevan Hall, Church Lane, Upper Beeding, West Sussex BN44 3HP Telephone: 01903 816911

Email clerk@upperbeeding-pc.gov.uk, Website www.upperbeeding-pc.gov.uk

Clerk: Celia Price PSLCC

- People feeling that the Council is trustworthy.
- People feeling that Council involves them in making decisions about future priorities.
- People feeling that they have opportunities to participate with the council and can influence the decision-making process.
- People feeling that they wish to be more involved in decision-making.
- People being satisfied with the way the Council runs things, and with particular services provided by the Council.
- People feeling that the council provides value for money.
- People exercising their right to vote at local elections.

This information could be obtained through a questionnaire delivered to individual households which includes the option to feedback to us how we can improve in each area.

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APPENDIX A

Roles and Responsibilities of WSCC, HDC, UBPC

West Sussex County Council is responsible for the following

- Education, children and families
- Roads and Transport (Roads, Rights of Way, Bridleways and Footpaths)
- Public Transport
- Planning
- Land Waste and Housing
- Fire, Safety, Emergencies and Crime
- Developing Business
- Consumer Protection
- Social Care and health
- Libraries
- Waste Management
- Leisure, recreation and community
- Trading Standards

Horsham District Council is responsible for the following

- Waste, recycling and bins
- Council Tax Collections
- Council democracy and elections
- Housing
- Planning and development
 - Planning Applications
 - Neighbourhood plans
 - Local Plan
- Parking
- Parks and countryside
- Environmental Health including
 - Food hygiene
 - Health and safety at work
 - Housing Standards
 - Animals and Pests
 - Noise and nuisance
- Business Support and advice
- Environment protection and pollution
- Licensing including
 - Alcohol premises
 - Events
 - Animals
 - Taxi and Private Hire

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Upper Beeding Parish Council is responsible for the following:-

- Amenities
 - Trees
 - Grass cutting
 - Bus shelters
 - Play areas and equipment
 - Skate Park
- Recreational and Sport facilities
- Youth Clubs
- Wardens
- Cemeteries
- Consultation on
 - Planning applications
 - Neighbourhood plan
- Allotments
- Grants to help local voluntary and business organisations
- Representing local residents and working on their behalf in relation with WSCC and HDC
- Control of litter, graffiti, dog fouling, fly posting
- Local coordination of emergency issues such as flood protection

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APPENDIX B KEY STAKEHOLDERS WITH UBPC

- Residents
- Parish Councillors
- West Sussex County Council
- Horsham district Council
- South Downs National Park
- Community and Voluntary Groups
- Hard to Reach Groups, such as older people and youth groups
- Village Organisations, including sporting organisations
- Business Community
- The Local Press
- Major Landowners
- Primary School
- Steyning Grammar 6th Form College
- The Public Sector, Police, Fire, Health