

WALDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

Community Engagement Strategy

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Introduction

Effective communication and community involvement are critical in earning the respect and good will of the community we serve. By engaging with the community, the Council are able to develop a greater understanding of the needs and views of our residents, thus ensuring greater levels of satisfaction, and allowing us to improve and tailor the services we provide.

Community engagement is about giving local people a voice. Waldrige Parish Council is committed to encouraging residents to become actively involved in decisions that affect them and their community. We recognise that the services we provide must reflect the needs of our Parishioners and believe that they should be actively involved in the decision-making process.

Aims

The aim of our Community Engagement Strategy is to engage residents, to encourage participation, and to create a more active and informed community by:

- improving the way in which the Council communicates with members of the community
- listening to the views of residents on important issues
- using these views to help shape and improve the services we provide
- improving the long-term social, economic and environmental wellbeing of our residents
- planning the future development of the parish in accordance with community priorities and needs

Objectives

The objectives of our Community Engagement Strategy are to:

- use a variety of methods to make information available
- actively encourage and facilitate community engagement
- proactively engage with all sections of the community
- involve members of the community in the decision making process

Forms of Communication

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

Parish Council Notice Boards

There are four notice boards in the Parish, which are located at:

- Waldrige Parish Rooms
- Fenton Close
- Millennium Green
- Bus stop on the C11, next to the entrance to Falstone Drive

Information posted in the notice boards includes but is not limited to: meetings notices and agendas, details of vacancies and elections, and information on upcoming events.

Parish Council Website

The Parish Council website is available at www.waldrige parish.co.uk and includes a wide variety of information. On the website you will find: meeting dates, notices, agendas and minutes; contact details for all Councillors and the Parish Clerk; reports and adopted policies; latest news; a calendar of events; and much more.

Clippings

Waldrige Parish Council's newsletter – the Clippings – is published four times per year and is delivered to every household in our Parish. The Clippings contains information on activities and projects that have recently taken place or are currently being carried out by the Council. Details of upcoming events and important dates are also included, along with contact details and ways to get in touch.

e-Clippings

As a Council, we are committed to being environmentally friendly wherever possible, and we are always looking for ways in which we can improve. One of the ways in which we are aiming to improve is by providing an electronic version of our newsletter – the Clippings – for those who prefer to be paperless. The e-Clippings is delivered via email, with the content being the same as the print version.

Facebook Group

The Parish Council have a Facebook group (search 'Waldrige Parish Council'), which is open to all residents of the Parish. The Facebook group is an informal group, which allows our residents to share ideas and concerns, and to ask questions and make requests. Details of upcoming Parish events, and opportunities to participate are posted regularly.

Opportunities for Community Involvement

We aim to provide as many opportunities as possible for our residents to become involved in the decision-making process. Opportunities currently provided are:

Parish Council Meetings

The Parish Council meet on the second Tuesday of every month except August. These meetings are open to the public, and time is set aside, prior to the commencement of the meeting, for members of the public to make comments and ask questions. Members of the public may also make a request to speak on any item on the agenda. For further details, please see our 'Public Participation Policy'.

Annual Parish Meeting

Once a year, an Annual Parish Meeting is held, which is an opportunity for residents to meet, receive reports from local community groups, and discuss local matters.

Parish Council Surgeries

Waldrige Parish Council hold monthly surgeries at the Waldrige Parish Rooms. These are attended by two Councillors on a rota basis, and residents are encouraged to come along on a drop-in basis to give feedback, and to discuss ideas or concerns that they may have. Issues can be discussed in confidence if required, and appointments are available on request. The dates and times of upcoming surgeries can be found in our four noticeboards, Parish Council's website, in the Clippings newsletter, and on the Facebook group.

Access to Parish Councillors

In addition to meetings and surgeries, Parish Councillors can be also contacted directly. Contact details for each Councillor are listed on the Parish Council website or can be obtained via the Parish Clerk.

Consultation

On occasion, the Parish Council may require a higher level of resident input, before it can make a decision. When this is required, the Council may seek the opinion of residents in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to, consultations, paper questionnaires, leaflets, and online surveys. The results of these will be made publicly available and will be used by the Council when making their decisions.

Partnership Working

Waldrige Parish Council are committed to working with local voluntary and community groups to improve the quality of life of our residents.

The Parish Council will work with Local Authorities (County and the Police) to ensure improvement in the quality and delivery of services.

The Parish Council will work with neighbouring Parish Councils to find solutions to common problems.

The Parish Council will continue to support and engage with local organisations to assist them in meeting their own aims and objectives.

The Parish Council will continue to support local projects and events.