

CUCKFIELD PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Aims and Objectives

Cuckfield Parish Council is the closest tier of local government to the community. The Parish Council wants to work closely with the public, including all residents, community groups and businesses, to encourage participation in decision making. The aim is to secure better services and to create a more active and informed community.

The Community

The Parish Council seeks to engage with **all** sections of Cuckfield's community including the the young, disenfranchised, disaffected and the elderly as well as the local business community, the many clubs, organisations and societies which are active in the parish, its partners such as Mid Sussex District Council, West Sussex County Council and the neighbourhood policing team, the local schools and churches. The Parish Council is also committed to engaging with any persons who appear to it to have an interest in matters relating to the economic, social and environmental well being of its area

Information to the Community

The Parish Council lists details of all documentation available to the public under the Freedom of Information Act on its website www.cuckfield.gov.uk This information is also available in hard copy from the office.

A quarterly newsletter is sent (either by hand or by post) to all households in the parish together with the Annual Report which includes a statement of the accounts. The full accounts are available for inspection from the Parish Council office. All agendas and minutes of meetings are available on the website

There is a published Parish Plan (available on the website) that details the priorities for the Parish Council.

Opportunities for Community Involvement

All Parish Council and Committee meetings are open to the public and include a public session when residents can make representation to members. The Parish Council arranges open days when the work of the Council is displayed and the public is given the opportunity to engage with councillors on different topics of current interest. All councillors are available for informal discussion and their telephone numbers and their contact details are to be found in the newsletter, from the Parish Council office or on the website.

Opportunities for Formal Representations to the Council

Representations to the Parish Council will normally be considered at the relevant committee meeting, unless they require the provision of information only, when the clerk will provide it accordingly. The Parish Council has a Code

of Practice for handling complaints, which is available from the clerk. The publication of agendas on the Parish Council's website and notice board gives residents the opportunity to make representation to the council before agenda items are discussed. All formal representations received are responded to by letter or email.

Involvement in Partnerships

The Parish Council is committed to partnership working where it is clear that it will be of benefit to the parish or to fulfil its statutory requirements. For example, the Parish Council works in partnership with other local councils, i.e. the Three-Tier Four-Parish Group and is represented on the Governing Body of Holy Trinity Primary School. The Parish Council works with both Mid Sussex District Council and West Sussex County Council to improve service delivery in the parish.

Role of Council Members and Officers

Elected members are powerful advocates for their community and their leadership role enables them to have a major input into the consultation and engagement process. Cuckfield Parish Councillors are very accessible, their contact details are published on the website and in the quarterly newsletters to parishioners. They are available to talk to residents during the public session at the start of each Parish Council meeting and at the Annual Parish Meeting. In a private capacity, councillors belong to many other local clubs, societies and organisations, where they may, if they so wish, promote the work of the Parish Council and be available to parishioners.

The clerk can be contacted at the Parish Council Office in the Queen's Hall which is open on from 10 am - 4 pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, by telephone or by email.

Specific Areas for Community Involvement

The council will consult the community should it resolve to undertake, initiate or facilitate any major projects or undertakings in the parish.

The production of the Village Design Statement is a current example where a number of residents have become involved in the process of producing this document which it is hoped will become will become Supplementary Planning Guidance for developers wanting to build in Cuckfield..