

**OLD MARSTON PARISH COUNCIL**

# **Community Engagement Policy**

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The parish council is committed to community engagement at all levels and both supports and encourages community members to share their hopes and wishes for themselves, their families and other community members with the council.

The council achieves these objectives through:

## Communications

The council supports the following specific communications channels:

- **The Marston Newsletter:** This is the newsletter of the parish council, which is printed at least twice a year and delivered, where practical, to every home in the parish, as well as business premises. There is also an online version on the parish council website.
- **The Marston Times:** This is newsletter of St Nicholas Parish Church, which is printed quarterly and delivered where practical to every home in the parish. There is an online version published each month on their website.
- **Website:** The parish council website is updated regularly with official documents of the council, as well as news and information on local facilities and services.
- **Noticeboards:** The parish council has a noticeboard on Mortimer Hall next to the entrance facing the car park. Notices are displayed as and when they are required.
- **Annual Report:** This is distributed to all homes and businesses.

## Parish Council Meetings

There is time allocated near the start of each main meeting when members of public have the opportunity to address members of the council with their concerns. Members of public can speak for up to five minutes each for no more than twenty minutes in total. The chairman may, in agreement with the council and on the advice of the clerk, allow additional time for members of public to address the council, provided it does not adversely affect the remaining agenda items of the meeting.

The parish council meeting must comply with the council's standing orders, its legal requirements and good governance, in order to ensure good practice is maintained.

## Annual Meeting

The Parish Annual Meeting is the main opportunity to bring the community together, to allow residents to question the elected members and to review how they help shape the community. To be successful, good planning is needed. It is the responsibility of the parish clerk to timetable an annual meeting date, organise the venue and ensure that parish, district and county councillors attend and have a part to play. The parish council should determine the "interest theme" for each annual meeting to encourage maximum turn out by the community. The main objective of the annual meeting is to provide and encourage two-way communication between the community and councillors.

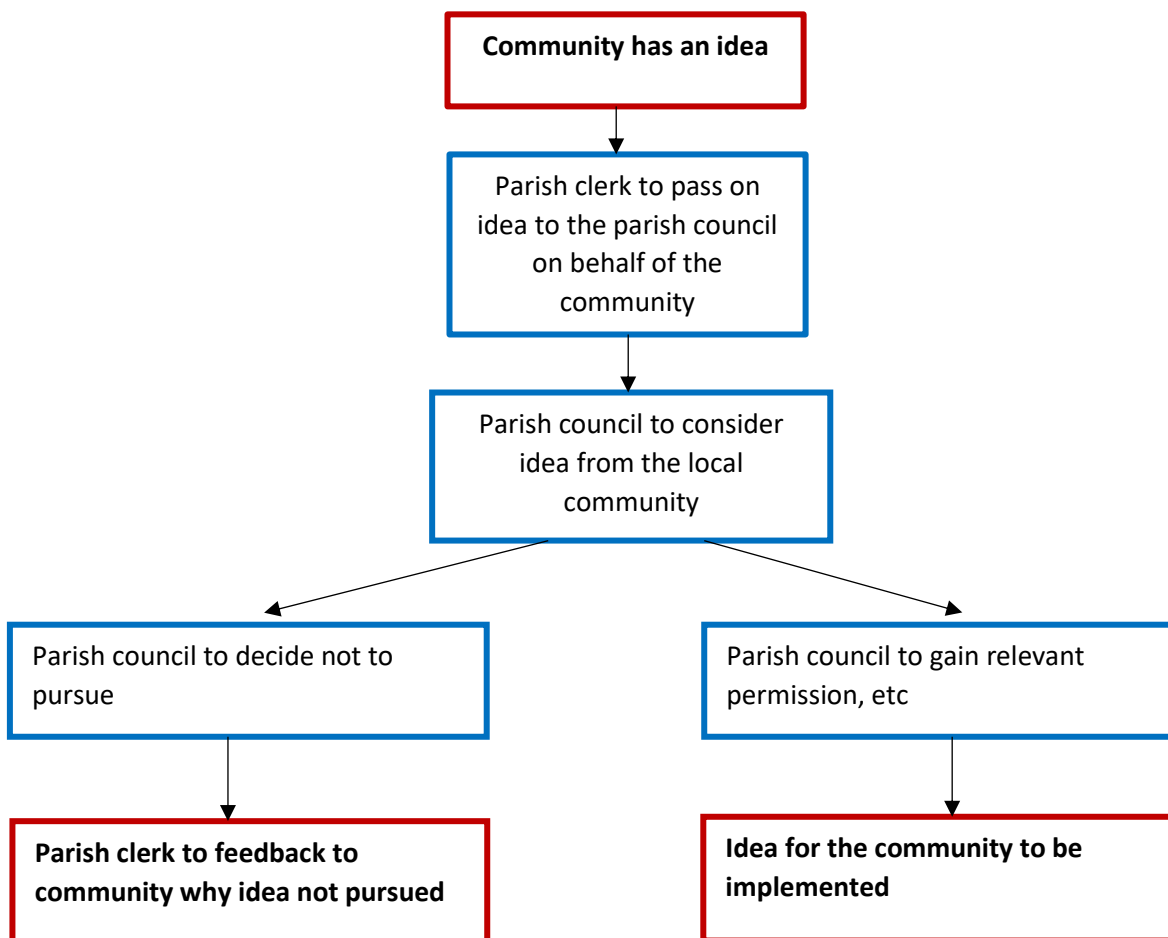
## Public Meetings

From time to time the council may decide that an item may warrant being dealt with through a specially convened public meeting. The clerk will arrange the meeting venue with any costs being met by the council. The parish council chairman is expected to chair any public meeting but may in some circumstances delegate this role to another member. The parish clerk will prepare the agenda, which will be posted on the parish council web site and noticeboard. The clerk will take the minutes of the meeting. If they are unable to attend the meeting, then chairman will nominate an appropriate person to undertake this function. In all respects the minutes format and content will follow the agenda and will comply with standing order requirements.

## Consultation Programmes

The council will aim to consult regularly with residents, ranging from the public participation sessions at the start of each parish council meeting to formal consultation programmes, where information must be disseminated widely and feedback obtained in order to shape the programme and demonstrate democracy in action.

## Community Engagement Processes



For large or complex consultation programmes, it may be necessary to form working parties, consisting of councillors and members of the public, in order to organise the consultation program. Outcomes from surveys and consultation draft materials should be made available to the public through the Marston Times, noticeboards and the website for transparency purposes.

The council will decide whether a particular event or program has a short, medium or long-term effect on the parish and warrants a specific consultation program. Examples of this may include:

- Parish road safety planning
- Boundary change proposals
- Proposed housing developments

In all cases, a working group, initially made up of parish councillors, will be set up and asked to review the need for a consultation program and to present its recommendations to the parish council in order to make a decision.

## The Recommendations Should Include as a Minimum:

- Whether or not a consultation program is required
- The suggested working party makeup, which may include members of the public
- Objectives that apply, together with the scope and expected timeframe for the program
- Whether or not the consultation program will need to engage with the wider community
- A working party to analyse any results and report to the council with the outcomes.

The parish council will have the option to accept all or part of any recommendation made by the working group by way of a majority decision by councillors.

## Post Community Engagement

### **Keep Parishioners Informed**

Engagement activities are often surrounded by a great deal of energy and enthusiasm, both in council and throughout local communities. However, once this energy has subsided, it is very important to ensure that parishioners are kept informed of the progress in the development of the community engagement project and if there are any future opportunities for their involvement.

### **Access to Data**

To ensure that all processes surrounding the development of the community policy are transparent and accountable. If the council receives multiple replies, then the council will create a composite and hold the actual replies for thirty days before destroying the data either by deleting if electronic or by shredding if on paper. It is important to ensure that individual participants in the engagement process are not identified in the data.

### **Observe the Timetable**

Once the timetable is set and published, then it is important to keep to the timetable and to publicise any changes if the timetable cannot be met. Parishioners will regard the various stages of engagement as milestones in the overall process, and it is most important to maintain the trust and support of the community by meeting their expectations in this regard.

### **Evaluation**

Following each round of community engagement, it is important for the parish council team to evaluate the community engagement process. An evaluation of these processes will enable the parish council to pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of its approach to community engagement and will foster a 'continuous improvement' approach to planning and managing community engagement.

## **Review of the Policy**

This Community Engagement Policy provides the framework for how communications, consultations and engagement with the community will be undertaken, and it will be reviewed annually and updated as appropriate.

## **Adopted**

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Minute reference: 22/07/15

Signed: Duncan Hatfield (Chairman)

Review Date: May 2023