

Fairlight Parish Council

STATEMENT OF INTENT AS TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. Introduction

1.1 The Council aims to provide services of high quality and to represent the interests of the area it serves to other bodies of all kinds. Its conduct is governed by statute. This statement outlines the Council's intentions with regard to community engagement.

2. The Community

2.1 The Council is directly responsible to the people of its area, who collectively form 'the community'. Within the community there are a variety of different bodies and the Council must therefore relate closely to those bodies as well as the community as a whole.

2.2 This latter group includes:

- Business and their representative bodies;
- Those who use the services provided by the Council, whether residents or not;
- Non-residents working in the Parish Council area;
- Visitors, whether tourists or those using the parish's facilities and shops;
- Voluntary groups including church and youth organisations;
- Schools and other educational establishments;
- Other statutory bodies providing services within the Parish Council area.

3. Aims and objectives

3.1 The Council aims to ensure that residents and the groups above are appropriately involved in the decision making process, particularly in relation to the provision of services and facilities irrespective of whether or not they are the direct responsibility of the Parish Council.

3.2 Whenever possible and practicable the Council will encourage the involvement of community members in order to identify their needs and concerns. To this end the Council will maintain and develop effective working relationships with all sectors of the community in the expectation that this will lead to:

- Improved satisfaction with public services affecting Fairlight;
- A greater sense within the community that people are involved in decisions which affect them;
- Greater awareness within the community of the role and responsibilities of the Council.

4. Opportunities for community involvement

4.1 As a matter of good practice (and in order to obtain its status as a Quality council), the Council needs to demonstrate the ways in which it engages with the community.

These include:

- Access to the Council's clerk on a daily basis;
- A web-site fairlight.org.uk which includes a wide range of information about the Council and its work as well as about the Council Members themselves;
- The publication of a quarterly newsletter;
- The publication of an Annual Report which summarises activities in the year in question including accounts;
- Displaying throughout the area the agendas for all Council and Committee meetings, including a clear statement encouraging the public to attend;
- Advertising the annual timetable of all Council and committee meetings;
- Providing a specific period for public questions at the end of each Council meeting;
- Nominating Councillors to attend meetings of other organisations and groups.
- Organising the annual Parish Assembly open to all residents;
- Publishing contact details for councillors in the Annual Report and every newsletter as well as on noticeboards.

5. Opportunities for formal representation to the Council

5.1 The Council may appoint advisors on specific areas of activity but, as indicated in the previous section, welcomes the attendance at meetings of individuals or organisations. On a day to day basis, the Clerk is generally available to discuss matters of interest or concern.

6. Involvement in partnerships

6.1 In addition to nominating, on an informal basis, representatives to attend meetings of voluntary groups and organisations, the Council is formally represented by virtue of the constitution of groups such as the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

7. Specific areas for community involvement

7.1 The Parish Council leads in the arrangements for the Parish Assembly and may invite presentations from guest speakers on a topic of current and particular interest to the community.

7.2 From time to time particular topics arise which are of sufficient community wide interest to justify the organisation of a public meeting, for example on the development of the Market Garden site.

7.3 The Council may also undertake consultation on a specific issue with a particular group.