

# HARPENDEN TOWN COUNCIL

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Strategy seeks to support the Town Council's Aims and Vision for the future by involving the local community in order:

- To promote and represent the community's views and aspirations at local, county, regional and national level.
- To serve those who live in the Town, work in the Town and visit the Town.
- To promote growth of Council activities where new services can be taken on effectively and efficiently.
- To strive to improve the quality of life for all residents of the Town.
- To work in partnership at local, county, regional and national level to promote and provide for the well being of the Town.

1.2 This Strategy works along side the St Albans and District Community Strategy, Shaping our District together for 2020, which seeks to "... provide a vision for improving quality of life for everyone who lives, works and visits St Albans district."

### 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 The Town Council Community Engagement Strategy is a responsive document which addresses:

- The role of community engagement and its importance;
- How the Town Council engages the community and identifies the needs and aspirations of the community;
- How the Town Council can improve community engagement.

2.2 The Strategy will be continually monitored to:

- Encourage effective local community engagement through the development of a network of relationships;
- Ensure that there is a clear understanding of the need to engage with the community about decisions which would/could affect them;
- Ensure that there is clear and open communication and accessibility to all;
- Enable and ensure that all types of feedback obtained from the community have an input on the decision making process and delivery of services;
- Identify how the Town Council can enhance its profile through engagement with the community.

### 3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

3.1 The Town Council currently facilitates community engagement in the following ways:

- Providing an opportunity for public questions at each Committee or Council, in accordance with Standing Order 61. This provides an opportunity for local residents to make representations or ask questions relating to items on the agenda.
- Publishing contact details of all Town Council members and officers.
- Production of the quarterly Forum newsletter highlighting local events and latest developments within the Town Council and the wider community.
- Ensuring that agendas and minutes of Committee meetings and Council are available to the community, including copies upon request.
- Ensuring copies of the Town Council's statutory documents, i.e. the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, are available.
- Ensuring that all statutory documents and required information, in particular agendas, minutes, Members, Annual Report, Statement of Accounts, Forum are published on the website.
- Ensuring that the Council's website contains details of the Town Council's activities/functions and links to the community.
- Involvement in partnerships with other public bodies to provide improved community amenity areas and services.
- Involvement in and facilitating local community groups and public meetings.
- Town Council press releases are published in local newspapers to keep the general public informed of community events, Town Council projects and other items as necessary.
- The Town Council's Information Point is open from 10.00 am until 16.00 pm, Monday to Friday.
- Town Councillors live within the Town and have close ties to their constituents and local voluntary and community organisations on a day-to-day basis, making them uniquely placed in terms of informed representation.

### 3.2 The Town Council is committed to improving community engagement by:

- Monitoring all the above activities and services, in order to further improve relationships with the community.
- Ensuring that any information published is clear, concise and widely available both in hard copy and electronic versions. This includes making information available in appropriate formats for people with visual impairments, learning disabilities, poor literacy or people who require language translation.
- Developing a web-based media resource (i.e. Issue Response) to engage consultation with the local community and wider interested parties.
- Identifying opportunities to work with existing and other local community groups, as and when the need arises.
- Publicising the achievements from working relationships between the Town Council and other community groups; in order to encourage new relationships/partnerships to be formed and raise civic pride.
- Ensuring that appropriate evaluation is carried out following consultation exercises to ensure that lessons learned are carried forward and an assessment of how effective/useful the consultation was.