



Portbury Parish Council: STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Background

Community engagement works best where it is an ongoing cumulative process enabling relationships and trust to build and strengthen over time. At the time of writing this statement there is a pressing need to engage with our Community as the Strategic Plan for our District becomes adopted and with it the Neighbourhood Plan for Portbury develops. Portbury Parish Council aims to achieve a high standard of engagement with all our stakeholders. Whilst also focussing effort on modern media, such as Facebook, we will also endeavour to stay in touch with harder to reach groups who may not have access to or be familiar with such technology.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Portbury Parish Council is the first tier of local government within our community. It is vital therefore that the Council engages closely with the community it serves. The Council and Councillors play a vital role as they make decisions which affect the area in which we live and work. We aim to make a positive quantifiable difference to the quality of life in our community. This statement outlines how we ensure the community is kept informed and enables the community itself to contribute to activities and decision making of this Council for the benefit of the community.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Portbury Parish Council aims to:

- Represent and promote the interests of Portbury and all of its people in all forums.
- Pay attention to the needs of young people and vulnerable members of the Community
- Provide amenities and services at the best quality possible for the resources available to the Council
- Actively involve local people in decisions which affect the community
- Promote equal opportunities and oppose discrimination
- Be accountable, approachable and open in all activities
- Support sustainable development which is economically, environmental and socially sound
- Protect and enhance the ecological and environmental assets within the community

To achieve these aims the Council will:

- Liaise closely with residents, community groups and businesses
- Enable and facilitate all relevant parties to participate in decision making, monitoring services and planning for the future.
- Ensure the views of local residents are captured through community engagement and utilise any concerns effectively within the Council's decision making processes.
- Ensure that residents have the opportunity to be heard at every stage and are given the capacity to be effective citizens

The outcomes the Council hopes to achieve are:

- Better communication with the local community
- An improved understanding within the community of the role of the Parish Council and its councillors
- Allowing local people to have input to decision making
- Improved public satisfaction with local public services

DEFINING THE COMMUNITY

The Council considers the community of Portbury to consist of:

- All residents in the community
- All those who work in the community
- All those who own/run businesses in the community
- All young people who live and/or go to school within the community
- All local voluntary organisations, clubs and societies
- Any group or organisation that represents some or any of the members of the above sections of the community

The Council also understands that there are other bodies that are vital to the quality of life in our community and we aim to maintain a good working relationship with them, including the Police, other tiers of local government and neighbouring town and parish councils.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO THE COMMUNITY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Information is provided to the Community from the Parish Council in a variety of ways including:

- The Parish Administrator is available to be contacted during day hours to provide a wide range of information on Portbury's activities and issues
- The Council's website provides information which includes agenda's and minutes, contact details for all Councillors, links to a number of groups and organisations in the community. Members of the public can also make direct contact with the Council through this website
- The Parish Council provides 2 notice boards within the community one in the main Village and one in Sheepway. These are used to display council meetings and all other statutory notices. Sections of these notice boards are also designated for community use for local groups to advertise their up and coming events
- The Parish Council publishes a quarterly Newsletter which is mailed to its database of registered readers. Social media is increasingly used and the Newsletter is also posted on 2 groups that have been created for the Community – see below
- An annual report is published every year and is reported at the Annual Residents' meeting, usually held in May. This report is also posted on the Parish Council website or can be collected from the Administrator to the Council.

- All meetings of the Council and committees are open to the public and a period is set aside for public questions relating to items on the agenda if residents wish to make a representation
- Public meetings can be held from time to time to gauge public opinion about important issues affecting the community.
- Questionnaires are used sometimes to ask local residents about specific matters, these are distributed by both e-mail and at the monthly Community Cafe at the Village Hall. Social Media is also used as this has the potential to reach the greatest number of people; questionnaires are published here in the form of Polls which record and store responses for later evaluation
- Social Media and e-mail is becoming the widest and most effective way of communication with our Community. The Council operates its own Facebook page and group and also monitors the general Village Notice Board Group, responding to posts here as if they had been directed to the Council. This method of communication provides speedy and effective reassurance to our Community that issues are being picked up.
- The Council endeavours to ensure that its own e-mail database is up to date and encourages all residents to register their address for receipt of Council Communications.
- If necessary, for issues of the greatest importance, the Council will distribute hard copies of documents by hand to all residences in the Parish. This is usually done by the Councillors delivering door to door

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FORMAL REPRESENTATION TO THE COUNCIL

- Formal representation may be made at any time to the Administrator in Writing or by using the contact page on the Parish Website
- A period for representation is set aside near to the beginning of Council meetings

INVOLVEMENT IN PARTNERSHIPS

The Parish Council works in partnership with a number of other organisations within our community, including the North Somerset Council and the Police. It also has representatives on the following local organisations.

- Royal Portbury Docks – Port liaison group
- Portbury Wharf Nature Reserve (pending)

It also works very closely with –

- Portbury Village Hall and Social Club committee
- St Mary's the Virgin Church Parochial Council
- St Mary's CEVA Primary School

COUNCIL MEMBERS AND THE PARISH CLERK

Council members (Councillors) are elected decision makers of the Parish Council. They represent the community and bring issues to the Council meetings for corporate decisions to be made. Their contact details are available from the Parish Website, the Parish Council website and also on the notice boards within the parish. Members of the public are welcomed to contact Councillors to raise any issues. The Parish Administrator is employed

by the Parish Council to carry out day to day functions of the Council and has overall responsibility for the management of services provided by the Parish Council. The Administrator, in conjunction with the named Parish Clerk, also advises the Council on the powers available for it to carry out its functions. The Administrator will also advise on current legislation and changes to legislation which are necessary for the Council to carry out its duties.

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