

Community Engagement Policy

Cottenham Parish Council has developed a community engagement policy with the aim of constructing a standard for engagement with its residents and partners.

It recognises that the services it provides must reflect the needs of its residents and the locality.

Aim

The aim of the policy is to improve the way in which the Council engages with residents, relevant partners and those working within the community through:

- The communication of current, relevant and open and transparent information
- A pro-active consultation process to encourage effective local engagement
- Adhering to the principle of inclusivity
- A commitment to listening to views in order to initiate, develop and enhance services

Objectives

- To improve, plan and shape the future of the Parish according to local needs and priorities.
- To improve the quality, value for money and delivery of services.
- To use engagement to provide information in the Council's decision making, ensuring decisions are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the community.
- To enhance the general well-being of the community.
- To be a stronger, more active and cohesive Parish.

Provision of information to the community and opportunities for community involvement

Community engagement will be achieved by the Parish Council communicating, consulting, supporting and working together with its residents, partners and businesses.

- **CPC website** - provides details of contact details for the Council and individual Councillors (including District and County), Council services and activities and gives access to a range of documents as well as links to useful sites.
- **Cottenham Village Newsletter** – published every other month and delivered to every house and business in Cottenham. It is also available on the Newsletter website and via their Facebook page. The Clerk contributes council news in each edition as well as informative articles.
- **Fen Edge Newsletter** – published quarterly and delivery to every house in the 'Fen Edge' patch. The Clerk contributes council news in each edition as well as informative articles.
- **Open Meetings** – all meetings of the council and its standing committees are open to the public and include an opportunity for residents to engage with Councillors. Cambridgeshire County and District Council Councillors attend most monthly Council meetings.
- **Committees/working parties** – sports clubs are included as non-voting members on our Leisure and Facilities Committee to ensure we understand their needs and are able to integrate their growth aspirations into our future plans. A Traffic and Transport group has been set up consisting of residents and Councillors to gain their feedback on highway issues.
- **Face to face** – our offices are open to visiting members of the public one morning a week and by appointment.

- **Events** - we hold a stall at village events such as the yearly Feast parade and Fun Run and biennial Fen Edge Festival, where information on the work of the Council is displayed. We are also involved with the yearly Remembrance Parade and Christmas Carol event.
- **Social media** - we have developed a Facebook page where we regularly post Council activities, consultations and news articles. The Clerk and Chair regularly check and comment on another active village Facebook page.
- **Consultations** – the Council undertakes consultations by questionnaire for specific issues. This can involve door to door calling where appropriate. For larger consultations the use of exhibitions and drop-in sessions should be considered.
- **Noticeboards** - notices of meetings, and key council communications, are posted on each of the Council's four notice boards. We also utilise boards in shops/key village buildings.
- **Banners** – display banners are posted on a prominent position on the Village Green to highlight important events.

Involvement in Partnerships

The Parish Council works in partnership with other organisations such as South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, the Police and Fire Service.

It also has representatives on the following local organisations:

- Sustainable Cottenham
- Cottenham Community Centre
- Friends of All Saints'
- Mobile Warden scheme
- Cottenham United Charities

It subscribes to:

- Cambridgeshire ACRE
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils
- Council for the Preservation of Rural England
- National Association of Local Councils
- Society of Local Council Clerks

It also liaises with

- All Cottenham Churches
- Cambridge Kids Club
- Cambridgeshire Police
- Connections Youth Bus
- Cottenham Bowls Club
- Cottenham British Legion
- Cottenham Cricket Club
- Cottenham United Football Club
- Cottenham United Colts Football Club
- Cottenham Day Centre
- Cottenham Guides and Scouts
- Cottenham Primary School
- Cottenham Tennis Club
- Cottenham Village College
- Dissenters Cemetery ICO
- Ladybird Pre-school
- Renegades Rugby

Statutory communication engagement

While community engagement is not mandated in all cases, in some matters the Council is bound by legislation to engage with the community. In these cases the Parish Council will adhere to the legislative requirement as a minimum standard. Community engagement is required under the following legislation:

- Local Government Act 1989
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Road Management Act 2004

While these acts stipulate required community engagement in certain circumstances, the Council is not prevented from carrying out further community engagement where local sensitivities or project complexities merit additional effort.

