

Community engagement policy

POLICY REVIEW	
Signed	
Minute reference	FUL/63/21/22
Date ratified	5 th July 2021
Date of next review	5 th July 2022

1 Introduction

1.1 Theale Parish Council is committed to working closely with the public. Everyone should be involved in making Theale the type of village they want it to be, whether they are a resident, a local group or business. Informing, consulting and involving people in the work of the parish council is key when it comes to making decision, securing better services, the local democratic process and creating an empowered and active citizenship.

1.2 The parish councils aims for community engagement fall under four headings:

inform consult engage act

1.3 The remainder of this policy is intended as suggestive, rather than prescriptive.

2 Inform

2.1 Theale Parish Council will inform by providing information about what is happening to help local people understand an issue, service or planned actions, options or solutions. This will be done by:

- a the parish council website, detailing all council services and activities
- b social media
- c posters, fliers, banners, advertising and publications
- d public meetings, presentations and briefings
- e information stalls, eg at council events
- f councillor presence on the High Street
- g local newspaper press releases, publications, radio and TV and interviews.

3 Consult

3.1 Theale Parish Council will consult by asking for feedback, advice or opinions on a particular issue. This will be done by:

- a surveys and feedback forms

- b interviews
- c residents' user panels and community groups
- d discussion and focus groups and forums
- e written consultation
- f consultation events, workshops, exhibitions and general events
- g online consultations
- h public meetings or surgeries
- i documents or information available at the parish council office, other public buildings and online.

4 Engage

- 4.1 Theale Parish Council wished to engage with individuals and organisations, such as the following:
- a residents of Theale
 - b local businesses, both in Theale Village and Arlington Business Park
 - c community, voluntary, special interest and residents' groups
 - d sports groups, such as Theale & Tilehurst Cricket Club and Theale Tigers Football Club
 - e hard-to-reach groups, including younger people and older people
 - f Theale Library
 - g educational establishments
 - h religious groups
 - i Theale Medical Centre and other health bodies.
- 4.2 Theale Parish Council will engage people by ensuring that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered, encouraging people to put forward ideas, options, initiatives and actions. This will be done by:
- a inviting people to take part in parish council meetings
 - b encouraging people to follow the parish council on social media
 - c inviting residents to the annual parish meeting
 - d public or specific targeted discussion meetings with interested parties
 - e public or stakeholder workshops to identify issues and shape options
 - f public events and interactive displays
 - g community-led plans and working groups
 - h comments and complaints
 - i councillor presence on the High Street
 - j interaction with Theale parish councillors and staff and other local government-led organisations.

5 Act

5.1 The following table lists the actions arising from the above part of this policy.

<i>Action plan item</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Status/frequency</i>
Chairman	Chairman to fulfil a community leadership role and encourage community organisations to be involved with initiatives	Chairman	Ongoing
Minutes	Ensure copies of minutes are available on the parish council website	Clerk	Ongoing
Annual parish meeting	Publicise the meeting and liaise with stakeholders to encourage attendance	Clerk	Annually
Parish council meetings	Encourage residents to raise matters of interest or concern via the public forum during council meetings	Councillors Clerk	Ongoing
Noticeboards	Regularly update noticeboards with parish council and community activities	Parish office	Ongoing
Website	Maintain website with information on parish council services and activities	Parish office	Ongoing
Office opening hours	Publicise office opening hours on the website	Parish office	Ongoing
Local democracy	Encourage residents to vote at and stand for the parish council at elections	Councillors Parish office	Ongoing, especially in six months before local elections
Press	Liaise regularly with the press by sending details of council meetings	Parish office	Ongoing
Social media	Use Facebook and other social media to promote parish council meetings and activities	Parish office	Ongoing
Councillor High Street presence	Inform parishioners of council activity and engage them in local government	Councillors	Monthly/weekly on Saturday mornings
Businesses	Engage with businesses and business organisations	Designate councillors	Ongoing