



# BIRSTALL PARISH COUNCILS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

**The Parish Council's Community Engagement Strategy was adopted at a Council meeting held on: 14 September 2020**

## **1. Introduction**

Birstall Parish Council has developed a community engagement strategy with the aim of constructing a standard for engagement with its residents, voluntary/community groups, business community and external partners.

It recognises that the services it provides must reflect the needs of its community and the environment.

Birstall Parish Council strongly believes that its residents should be involved in decisions affecting them and their community and in shaping the future of their parish.

## **2. AIMS**

The aim of the strategy is to determine the way in which the Council engages and consults its residents and external partners on important issues by:

- Informing, consulting, and involving
- Being inclusive and engaging with all its residents and partners
- Ensuring views are listened to and used to develop, enhance, and improve services, to the environment and the quality of life for residents.

## **3. OBJECTIVES**

- To improve, plan and shape the future of the community according to local needs and priorities.
- To improve the quality and delivery of services
- To use engagement to inform decision making, ensuring decisions are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the community
- To enhance the wellbeing of the community.
- To be a stronger, more active and cohesive community

## **4. HOW THIS WILL BE ACHIEVED**

Birstall Parish Council will achieve Community Engagement by, communicating, consulting, supporting, and working together with its residents, businesses and external partners using a variety of methods:

**Birstall Post & Your Local Magazine**, these publications are delivered to every house in Birstall at least 12 times a year, keeping residents informed on important issues and will be developed as a medium for consultation and include articles from members of the community on topical issues.

**The Parish Council website** has a wealth of local information and is updated on a weekly basis. Special events and important notices will continue to be added regularly. All agendas are published as required under the Local Government Act 1972, including on the website, and minutes of meetings are included on the website within a calendar month of the meeting. There is a 'Contact Us' form on the website for residents to submit their questions and concerns online.

**15 x Parish Council notice boards** are placed around the community in prominent positions. They are used to inform of Parish Council activities, external partner information and initiatives and the activities of community groups using the Village Hall and Hallam Fields Hall.

**Parish Council Offices** members of the public may call into the Parish Council offices during normal working hours as stated on the website.

**Social Media** the Parish Council have their own facebook page which is updated on a weekly basis. There is also a 'Contact Us' button on the page for residents to submit their questions and concerns online.

**Information leaflets** are available from the Parish Council office, some of which are available to download from the council website. New leaflets will be added as necessary.

**Meetings** of the Council and its Committees are open to the public and include an opportunity for members of the parish to engage with councillors. All Parish Council meetings include an adjournment for public participation. Courtesy notices are on all Agendas informing that the meetings may be being recorded / filmed.

**The Annual Report** this is produced for the Annual Parish Meeting in April of each year, and copies are published in the Birstall Post and the Your Local Magazine to aim that all residents receive a copy.

- **Consultation**

Consulting the community on important issues will be key to the strategy. It will ensure those most affected are able to put forward an opinion and are given the opportunity to be involved in making a difference.

Ensuring consultations include all members of the parish by identifying the hard to reach groups such as young people, the elderly, the housebound, the disabled, ethnic minorities, etc. which may require establishing different engagement channels for them.

- **Support**

The Parish council has implemented a Grant Aid policy, which sets aside an annual budget available for local organisations to apply for funding.

Supporting local projects and participating in local events to raise the awareness of the Parish Council and help them to meet their aims and objectives.

Supporting residents in shaping the future of their community to bring about a more cohesive community.

## 5. REVIEW

This strategy will be reviewed annually, and the results will be used as a continual improvement process for changes or amendments to the strategy.

## 6. OVERVIEW OF STRATEGY

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Statement</b>
Raise awareness of consultation processes	Promote it through the Parish website, Notice boards, local press, social media	Promoting the strategy will be an ongoing priority
Use of online technology for consultations / feedback	To continue to investigate various methods to obtain feedback	Promotion of online consultations will be continued and improved where necessary.
Work with Police and other External Partners	Strengthen existing partnerships and develop new ones	Continue to work with external partners & outside groups
Identify minority / hard to reach groups	Identify these groups and identify channels of contact and consultation	Ensure these groups are included in the consultation process.
Identify consultation / focus groups	Identify the key groups within the village who can be consulted on specialist subjects	This will enable smaller consultations to be initiated where specialist advice is required to inform decision making but without the need for a full consultation process

## 7. CONCLUSION

The adoption of a Community Engagement Strategy will assist in improving communication between the Parish Council and the wider community, and will enable the Parish Council to better understand the needs and aspirations of local residents and to be able to meet those needs and create an enhanced community spirit.