

Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston (LSWA) Parish Council is committed to engaging with and empowering its residents and communities so that they can be actively involved in decisions that affect them. The Council will work proactively to strengthen and improve working relationships with our partners; statutory bodies, organisations, local business and voluntary groups. LSWA Parish Council aims to be responsive to the needs of the local community and to involve its parishioners in the Council's decision-making about the issues which affect them including planning, delivery of services and the future of the area.

To achieve this, the Council will provide its parishioners with:

- relevant information about services, policies and decisions that might affect or interest them;
- opportunities for them to have their say about decisions, services and plans through consultations, surveys and conversation
- opportunities to get involved, over and above informing and consulting, to a greater influence over decisions and delivery.

In doing so, the Council will follow the principles set out below and will:

Honesty and openness

- Make clear the purpose of any engagement activity and use the right methods (proportionate to the significance of the issues) to engage the local community
- Be clear about what can be influenced
- Use honest, accurate and unbiased information

Listening

- Listen and respond to individuals and communities, enabling and empowering parishioners to play an effective role in setting priorities, designing services and influencing decisions to shape their local area.

Inclusion

- Undertake fair and impartial engagement to a high standard to ensure that all parishioners are offered equal opportunities to participate in issues that may affect them and make a difference.

Working together

- Act together when appropriate with a consistent approach to community engagement.
- Share knowledge and information openly with parishioners and partner organisations, whilst respecting confidentiality.
- Use what has been learnt from contact with local people to better understand and engage with the community, and to improve the services it delivers.

Keeping in touch

- Provide feedback and demonstrate the changes that are made as a result of engagement. The Council will use the following tools as appropriate to:
 - a) Provide a 'suggestion box' in each village for residents to post their thoughts
 - b) inform - posters, fliers and publications including Contact and the Annual Report - Public and specific meetings including Parish Council meetings, Annual Parish Meeting - Presentations, briefings. - Website updates, Email, social media
 - c) consult - Questionnaires and surveys - Online surveys and e-consultation (via the internet). - community groups. - Discussion/focus groups/forums/e-forum. - Written consultation through letter or email. - Consultation events/workshops/ /exhibitions/general events - Public, neighbourhood or specific meetings - Documents or information available in offices, public buildings or online. - Verbal consultation with community representative acting as a scribe.

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- d) Involve - Working parties - Public or specific targeted discussion meetings with interested parties - Public or stakeholder workshops to identify issues and shape options, - Public visioning events, ideas competitions, interactive displays. - Online discussion forums. - Community led plans (e.g. parish plans/neighbourhood plans)/community action plans. - Comments and complaints.

Council Surgeries

LSAW PC will hold a combined Surgery ahead of each Parish Council meeting (where practical) with local PCSO's to provide an opportunity for local residents to meet with their Parish Councillors and/or PCSO's in person. Parish Councillors will be present to answer questions, discuss local issues and receive feedback on the work of the Parish Council.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic meetings are being held remotely via Zoom. A member of the parish council and/or an officer will be available online half an hour before the start of each meeting and will be able to relay any concerns to a PCSO following the meeting.

Newsletters

LSWA Parish Council commits to produce a quarterly newsletter to engage with parishioners and update on the work undertaken between the periods.

The Parish Council Office plays a neutral role so that residents can be confident that they are receiving impartial information and support

Adopted March 2020, Reviewed March 2021, April 2022

Next Review: April 2023