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Community Engagement Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Eckington Parish Council has developed a Community Engagement Strategy to ensure that it engages with residents and partners in a constructive and effective manner. Eckington Parish Council recognises that the services it provides must reflect the needs of its parishioners and the locality and believes that its residents should be involved in shaping decisions affecting them and their neighbourhood.

AIMS

The aim of the strategy is to strive for improvement in the way in which the Council engages and consults with its residents and partners on important issues.

OBJECTIVES

- To improve, plan and shape the future of the Parish according to local priorities and need
- To improve the quality and delivery of services
- To use engagement to inform decision making, ensuring that decisions are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the Parish
- To consult with parishioner and service users to provide an evidence base for funding bids
- To be a stronger, more active and cohesive Parish
- To enhance the general well being of the Parish and its residents

HOW THIS WILL BE ACHIEVED

1 Communication

Parish Council Meetings

Meetings are open to the public and include an opportunity for parishioners to engage with councillors. Prior to the main agenda business, a period of public participation is held.

Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held between 1 March and 1 June each year.

Parish Council Notice Boards

The notice boards will be used to convey

- Contact details for Parish Council office and of all members
- Meeting dates and official notices
- Special events and important notices
- Parish Council surgery dates

Parish Council Annual Report

The Annual Report will inform residents of the activities of the Council over the year and include financial information and contact details for members and officers.

Parish Newsletter

The Parish Newsletter will be printed 4 times a year and distributed to every household with copies also available in over 20 outlets across all areas of the Parish. The Newsletter informs residents of the work and services of the Parish Council together with contact details for its members and staff. It may also include reports from other local organisations and provide general information.

Parish Council Website

The website will include

- Contact details of its officers
- Contact details of all members
- Meeting dates
- Minutes of meetings and policy documents
- Range of services and facilities
- Special events and important notices

Engagement with hard to reach groups

The Parish Council will endeavour to engage with hard to reach groups in our community and encourage young people to be involved with projects in the parish.

Social Media

Social Media (currently Facebook and Twitter) will be used by the Parish Council and the Civic Centre to

- Inform parishioners of local issues
- Inform parishioners of events

2 Consultation

Consulting parishioners on important issues will be key to success and the Council will seek to ensure that those affected are able to put forward an opinion and be given the opportunity to make a difference.

The Council is committed to ensuring that consultations reach as many members of the Parish as possible by identifying hard to reach groups that may require alternative engagement channels.

3 Working in Partnership

The Council will identify all potential partners and seek to work in partnership where this is in the best interests of the Parish and its residents.

STRATEGY REVIEW

Periodic review of the communication, consultation and partnership working will be carried out by the Parish Council and used as a continual improvement process for changes and amendments to the strategy.