

TILSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Community Engagement Strategy

Tilston Parish Council has developed this document as a means of exploring how it can improve its engagement with residents and the community. It is intended to provide a framework of best practice; to draw together activities and practices which have been developed over the years to produce a closer working relationship with the community it represents.

Tilston is a rural parish, situated 3 miles from Malpas the nearest key service centre identified in the Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C) Local Plan. The Parish benefits from one convenience shop, a public house, village hall, playing field and primary school. The centre of the village has access to broadband however the reliability of this varies on the edges of the village. Mobile signal is poor throughout the village.

This document is not intended to become a static document but one which will evolve over time reflecting the changes in the community of the Tilston Parish.

It is therefore essential that this strategy is subject to regular review and change at regular intervals.

Aims – Inform, Consult & involve

The aim of Tilston Parish Council's Engagement Strategy is continuously improve the way in which the Parish Council engages and consults with the community and key partners.

To this end all residents should be: -

- Informed of the council's activities and projects
- Consulted on council's activities and projects
- Have the opportunity to be involved in the council's activities and projects

Resulting in the views/opinions of the community becoming an integral part of Tilston Parish Council's decision-making process, improving any services provided by the council and ensuring the council better reflects the community it represents.

Objective

- Use consultation to improve the activities the Council undertakes, to ensure these activities best reflect the community's needs and aspirations.

Strategy – Communication & Consultation

Tilston Parish Council will achieve its objectives through the following ways: -

1) Communication

The Parish Council recognises the need to use different methods of communication to reach all sections of the community.

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Newsletters - The Parish Council is committed to submitting articles to the local Newsletter, Tilston & Shocklach Report when appropriate and will also circulate fliers to every home when required. Both fliers and newsletter articles will include information about the activities of the Parish Council as well as contact details.

Copies of Newsletter articles and information will be maintained on the Council's website.

Annual Report - The Parish Council will produce an Annual Report to be approved at its May meeting each year will include a chairman's report, and summaries of the accounts/budget, planning, meeting attendance and highlight other matters of interest.

Website – www.tilstonparishcouncil.co.uk – The role of the council website has changed with the creation of the Council's Face Book Page. The Website will be used to provide information about the Council's activities including meeting agendas and minutes and planning applications received. The website will also provide information as required by the Transparency Code including the accounts.

Face Book – The Council has established a Face Book page to provide the Parish Council a forum to disseminate information as quickly as possible and provide a forum for public comment and debate. Face Book will provide a more informal avenue for the Parish Council to communicate with residents.

Meetings – The council's meetings are advertised on the council's notice boards, on the website and Facebook page. Meetings are open to the public and include an opportunity for the public to speak as part of the meeting.

The Parish Council has established a distribution list for distribution on Council agendas (May 2020 includes over 20 email addresses)

Councillors – The councillors are well known members of the community and are easily accessible for those residents who wish to contact them. Many are also members of other organisations within the community including the Playfield and War Memorial Hall Committees. This provides a valuable opportunity for councillors to learn about the needs and aspirations of the area as well as to tell residents what the council is doing.

2) Consultation

Tilston Parish Council will consult residents, both formally and informally, at every opportunity when making important decisions.

The Parish Council will also seek to consult with all sections of the community including the traditionally hard to reach sections of the community.

Partnership Working

To achieve the council's objectives, it is essential for the parish council/councillors to support other groups, organisations, and individuals within the community to achieve their aspirations.

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It is also important that the council works with other authorities providing services within the area including the principle authority, Cheshire West and Chester Council and the Police.

Managing Expectation

The Parish Council is aware that increased communications with residents has resulted in an increased workload and it is therefore important to manage both the increased workload and resident's expectations.

Council Response Times

The Parish Council will respond to all communications whether by telephone, email or postal letter within 10 working days of receipt of the communication with the requested information or with information regarding actions being taken where appropriate.

Measuring Success of the Strategy

For the strategy to be effective it must be reviewed in terms of its appropriateness and relevance to the changing community in Tilston but also in terms of how effective it has been.

This can be achieved through monitoring a number of different aspects of the councils activities: -

- Responses to council consultations
- Residents contact with clerk and councillors
- Residents attendance to council meetings

Review of Strategy

The success of the strategy will be reviewed annually.

Ann Wright
Clerk to Tilston Parish Council
March 2017