

BILBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

Community Engagement Policy

Bilbrook 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 businesses and voluntary groups. To achieve this, the Council will provide its residents with:

- relevant information about services, policies and decisions that might affect them;
- opportunities for them to have their say about decisions, services and plans through attendance at parish council meetings, consultations, surveys and conversation;
- Opportunities to get involved, over and above informing and consulting, to give them greater influence over decisions and delivery.
- Information to promote elections and the importance of the democratic process and the value of being a councillor.
- Opportunities to volunteer within the Parish.

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

1. **Honest and open**

- 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

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

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

4. **Work together** - Act together when appropriate with a consistent approach to community engagement:

- Share knowledge and information openly with residents 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.

5. **Keep in touch** - Provide feedback and demonstrate the changes that are made as a result of engagement. The Council will use tools as appropriate to:

- **Inform** - posters, fliers, public meetings including Parish Council meetings, Annual Parish Meeting, presentations, briefings, website posts, social media posts and email.
- **Consult** - Questionnaires and surveys, e-consultations, discussion/focus groups/forums/e-forum, written consultation through letter, email or social media, consultation events/workshops/exhibitions/general events, public or specific meetings, and verbal consultation with residents.
- **Involve** – Set up working parties with interested parties to identify issues and shape options.

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This list of tools is not exhaustive. The Parish Council Office plays a neutral role so that residents can be confident that they are receiving impartial information and support.

6. A budget category “Community Engagement” has been created to allow money to be set aside for community engagement

Date of Review	Description of Revision
Sept 2023	Paragraph 6. Added (Recommendation of LCAS Quality)
Sept 2022	No changes
Sept 2021	No changes
Sept 2020	Policy adopted as part of the clerks CiLCA training.