

# BILBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

## Community Engagement Policy

### 1. Policy Statement

Bilbrook Parish Council (BPC) 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:

### 2. Honest and open

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

### 3. 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.

### 4. 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. The Council is committed to meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will actively seek to include residents from all protected characteristics in its engagement activities.

### 5. 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.

### 6. 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.

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- **Involve:** Set up working parties with interested parties to identify issues and shape options.

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.

Any personal data collected during community engagement activities will be processed in accordance with the council's Data Protection Policy and UK GDPR requirements.

### **6. Budgeting**

A budget category "Community Engagement" allows money to be set aside for community engagement

### **7. Legal Compliance**

This policy is underpinned by the Council's obligations under UK law, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) and Data Protection legislation (UK GDPR), which require public bodies to ensure their engagement is inclusive and data is handled securely.

### **8. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed by BPC Council annually, or sooner if there are significant changes in legislation or best practice.

### **Record of Changes**

<b>Date of Review</b>	<b>Description of Revision</b>
Sept 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 4. Include: Makes reference to the Equality Act 2010</li><li>• 6. Keep in Touch: Makes reference to the council's Data Protection Policy and UK Data protection requirements.</li><li>• 7. Legal Compliance paragraph added</li><li>• 8. Policy Review paragraph added.</li></ul>
Sept 2024	No changes
Sept 2023	Added Budgeting paragraph (Recommendation of LCAS Quality)
Sept 2022	No changes
Sept 2021	No changes
Sept 2020	Policy adopted as part of the clerks CiLCA training.