

Hartford Parish Council

Community Engagement Strategy

1. Aims and Objectives

The council's aims and objectives for seeking community engagement and the outcomes it hopes to achieve are:

Aims:

- Work more closely with residents, businesses and community groups;
- engage with as many people as possible who want to participate in decision-making, monitoring services and planning for the future;
- ensure that, by getting closer to the community and being accessible to all groups, local democracy is enhanced;
- ensure that through the use of a wide range of approaches to public involvement and community engagement, we actively encourage the involvement of residents, to capture their views and learn their concerns and effectively use those views as an integral part of the decision-making process;
- ensure that residents have the opportunities to be heard at every stage, and the capacity to be effective citizens.

Objectives:

This strategy is part of the council's commitment to creating and maintaining effective working relationships with all sectors of the community, based on trust, openness and constructive challenge. Outcomes of the strategy will include:

- Improved communication through the establishment of new channels of engagement.
- More residents understanding the role of Councillors and getting the best effect.
- Improved engagement with local communities, with more people feeling that they are involved in decision-making and a higher percentage of people involved in volunteering.
- Improved satisfaction with services provided by the Council.

2. Defining the Community

Hartford is a semi rural Parish situated on the outskirts of Northwich. The unitary authority is Cheshire West and Chester Council. There are a little over 2500 residential properties accommodating approximately 5500 electorate (as at 30 November 2009).

The community may be defined as consisting of residents of the parish; and

- Village Hall & its users,
- Head Teachers and Governors of primary and secondary schools
- Young people who live and/or go to school in the parish,
- Retail and other and Businesses in the community,
- Interest groups – clubs and societies e.g. Civic Society, Brownies, WI
- Voluntary organisations,
- Groups of people defined by a common factor such as age, disability, faith, and other groups,
- Councillors and public service representatives.

Role of Council Members and Officers

- The Parish is currently not party-political with 10 Councillors identified in the community, via newsletters, the website and published in the Council's annual report.
- There is one officer of the Council, (the Clerk/RFO) who covers the entire spectrum of the council work, and is currently based at the Clerk's home. Members of the public are welcome to call in or make appointments at mutually convenient times to visit the office. The officer is frequently dealing with meetings or in contact via email, telephone and letters etc.

Provision of Information to the Community

- Messages can be left 24/7 either by telephone or email.
- The names and contact details of all the Councillors are published on the website, in the 'Hartford News' and in the Annual Report.
- The Parish Council website address is also widely published and the site contains all the information an individual might wish to know about the work of the Parish Council and its individuals, including meeting minutes, policy documents, financial statements, annual report and how to contact anyone associated with the Council.
- The council prints 'Hartford News' on a monthly basis and this is delivered to every community group and business within the parish.
- Information, such as agendas of meetings, is published on the 2 notice boards around the parish and on the web site.
- The Police Community Support Officer, CWAC Ward Councillors and members of the press are invited to attend every Council meeting.
- An Annual Report is prepared and printed in the newsletter and on the web site.

Opportunities for Community Involvement

- It is recognised that members of the community may wish to engage with the Council at different levels - from the odd email or letter with a suggestion on how a service could be improved, to regular attendance at a Council meeting.
- Parish Council meetings are open to the public and there is a public forum during each council meeting.
- An Annual Parish Meeting is held in either May, giving the public and local organisations an opportunity to participate in the full meeting. This meeting is advertised widely and is used by the Council to report on the work carried out during the year. It is also an opportunity for the Council to obtain the views of residents on any matter which affects the community.
- The council undertakes consultations by questionnaire, public meetings as appropriate, for specific issues.
- The Council is always considering practical ways of engaging with people and community groups.
- The Council will continue to arrange, support and participate in community events.

Involvement with Partnerships

The council has a representative/involvement on the following

- Hartford Manor Primary School
- Cheshire Association of Local Councils
- Cloughwood School
- Marshalls Arm Nature Reserve
- Police Forum
- CWAC Community Forum
- Hartford Civic Society
- Friends of Mornant

Contact the Parish Council:

The Council and members may be contacted through the Parish Clerk:

Jo O'Donoghue, 231 Hartford Road, Davenham, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 8JT

Telephone: 01606-41862

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Website: www.hartfordparishcouncil.org.uk

This Statement of Intent for Community Engagement was approved for issue at the parish council meeting held on 8th November 2010

Signed

Rita Hollens (Chair)