

COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

- ✉ **Postal Address:** Highfield Park Visitor Centre, Hill End Lane AL4 0RA
- ☎ **Telephone:** (01727) 825 314
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2024-25 Item 53b

Community Engagement Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

Colney Heath Parish Council acknowledges the importance of engaging with the local community to ensure that its decisions and actions are informed, transparent, and inclusive. While recognising that not all individuals or groups will choose to participate, the Parish Council is committed to making the engagement process accessible to all who wish to contribute.

- 1.1. The Parish Council defines the community of Colney Heath as consisting of:
 - a. All residents of the parish
 - b. All users of Parish Council services
 - c. All those who work in the parish
 - d. All young people attending schools or colleges in the parish
 - e. All voluntary organisations, clubs, societies, and community groups
- 1.2. The Council values collaboration with key stakeholders who impact the quality of life in the area, including St Albans District Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Police, and neighbouring Town and Parish Councils.
- 1.3. Communication is defined as the act of informing the community about decisions and conveying relevant information.
- 1.4. Engagement is defined as actively involving the community in decision-making processes, providing opportunities for feedback, and using that feedback to shape outcomes.
- 1.5. The Council is open to receiving both positive and constructive feedback from the community and is committed to encouraging participation in Council matters.

2. COMMUNICATION

- 2.1. The Parish Council website will be the main source of information and will be regularly updated with news, decisions, and key announcements.
- 2.2. The Council will make use of social media platforms to reach a broader audience
- 2.3. Regular press releases will be prepared and distributed to local news outlets.
- 2.4. Information will be shared via noticeboards located around Colney Heath Parish, including community venues and public spaces.
- 2.5. Leaflets and informational materials will be displayed at key venues such as local community centres, and public spaces.
- 2.6. The Council will take steps to reach members of the community who do not have access to the internet, ensuring inclusivity through offline communication channels.

3. MEETINGS

4. Parish Council and committee meetings are open to the public, and residents are encouraged to attend. All meetings include a designated time for public participation, allowing direct engagement with councillors.

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- 4.1. The Annual Parish Meeting is an opportunity for residents to raise questions about the work of the Parish Council and discuss local issues.
- 4.2. The Council will continue to facilitate open forums for residents to engage with councillors on key issues.
- 4.3. Councillors will be appointed to represent the Parish Council in various community organisations to foster closer collaboration and ensure the community's voice is heard in external bodies.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1. When seeking community input on specific projects, proposals, or initiatives, the Parish Council will undertake consultations.
- 5.2. While most consultations will be open to the entire community, targeted consultations may be held with specific stakeholders when necessary.
- 5.3. For each consultation, the Parish Council will identify key stakeholders and ensure they are appropriately contacted to guarantee their participation.
- 5.4. Consultations will be publicised widely across multiple platforms, and a clear deadline for responses will be set.
- 5.5. The Parish Council will communicate the purpose of each consultation and how the results will influence decision-making processes.
- 5.6. The timing of consultations will be carefully considered to maximise community participation, avoiding clashes with major holidays or community events.
- 5.7. The format of consultations may vary and could include:
 - a. Online consultations via the Parish Council's website
 - b. Physical consultation documents available at key locations in the parish
 - c. Direct mail-outs, leaflets, and digital/social media engagement
 - d. Focus group discussions with specific stakeholder groups
 - e. Consultation events, such as public meetings or exhibitions at local events and gatherings.

6. REVIEW

This policy aims to ensure Colney Heath Parish Council maintains open, transparent, and effective communication with its community while providing ample opportunities for residents and stakeholders to engage with and influence local decision-making.

This policy was presented to Full Council in November 2024 and if adopted will be reviewed in November 2027 or as required if until legislation changes.