



CORFE MULLEN TOWN COUNCIL

Community Engagement Statement

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Corfe Mullen Town Council ('the Council') aims to ensure it uses a wide range of approaches to public consultation and community engagement, it actively encourages residents to inform its decision-making process and input into decisions which affect their day to day lives in the parish.
- 1.2. The Council is committed to creating and maintaining effective working relationships with all sectors in the community.
- 1.3. The Council recognises there are different levels of engagement and will endeavour to involve the community in the following ways:
 - Inform people about its work and the services it provides
 - Consult with and seek out the views of the community
 - Encourage community participation in local government
 - Collaborate with individuals, community groups and organisations where appropriate, to achieve agreed aims for the benefit of the parish
 - Build up effective working relationships within the community and encourage a sense of ownership of assets, infrastructure and new projects.

2. The Community

- 2.1. The Council seeks to engage with all sections of the community regardless of age, ability, gender, ethnicity, faith or sexual orientation.

Parishioners who may be particularly hard to reach such as the young, disenfranchised, disaffected, elderly, local business community, many clubs, organisations and societies which are active in the parish, its partners such as Dorset Council as the unitary authority, local neighbourhood policing team and places of worship.

- 2.2. The Council is also committed to engaging with any persons who appear to have an interest in matters relating to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the parish.

3. Provision of Information to the Community and Opportunities for Community Involvement

- 3.1. The Council recognises that members of the community may wish to engage at different levels and in a variety of ways, from the occasional email or letter with a suggestion on how a service could be improved, to attendance at meetings etc.
- 3.2. The Council will therefore use many ways to actively seek the views of its parishioners and involve them in its work.
- 3.3. **Publications:** communicate with parishioners through the chairman's article in the monthly link magazine and send at least one newsletter to all households yearly.
- 3.4. **Website:** a community resource which publishes information about the parish, the Council, and the many organisations which flourish in Corfe Mullen. All Council

meetings agendas and minutes, along with other documents, including the annual accounts, assets and policies are available on the website for parishioners' information.

Parishioners are invited to contact the Council via its website, or email office@corfemullen-tc.gov.uk. The Council is committed to developing and improving its website and will actively encourage parishioners to use its website to obtain information as a means of improving communication.

- 3.5. **Social Media:** the Council's Facebook page will act as a community noticeboard to share information and updates relating to the Council's work, activities, opportunities within the parish and to promote and connect with the community it serves positively.
- 3.6. **Direct Access:** notice boards are used to display agendas and information promoting other important events e.g., notices relating to the annual audit of accounts; casual vacancies, elections and forthcoming meetings etc.

Notice boards are located outside the Council Office on Towers Way, on the Sports Pavilion at the Recreation Ground, outside Hillview Post Office and on the Roman Road adjacent to The Close.

- 3.7. **Co-option:** the Council encourages the involvement of the community in its work through co-option. The Council is empowered to co-opt interested members of the community onto working parties.
- 3.8. **Annual Parish Meeting:** a meeting of local government electors of the parish. It is not a meeting of the Council. Anyone may attend but only registered electors of Corfe Mullen may vote. The Mayor and Chairman of the Council will present the Town Councils Annual Report detailing the work of the Council.
- 3.9. **Meetings:** agendas of all Council meetings are published on the notice boards and on the website. Parishioners are encouraged to attend Council meetings, where time is set aside for public participation for raising items in relation to the agenda. Parishioners are also actively encouraged to attend the Annual Parish Meeting, as above.
- 3.10. **Surveys:** undertake surveys and other related forms of information gathering from time to time to ascertain the community's views on a particular issue.
- 3.11. **Specific Projects:** from time-to-time the Council will undertake specific projects for the benefit of the community. The normal method for undertaking these is via a working party set up under a standing committee. Co-option as noted above is used to ensure the community is fully represented and involved in these projects.
- 3.12. **Councillor Drop-in sessions:** the Council encourages drop-in sessions to enable parishioners to engage face to face with Councillors on issues they may have.

4. Opportunities for Formal Representations to the Council

- 4.1. Representations to the Council will normally be considered at the next meeting of the

relevant standing committee. If, however, they require the provision of information only, then the clerk will provide it in accordance with the council's publication scheme.

4.2. The Council has a Code of Practice for handling complaints, which is reviewed annually, available from the Council Office and is also published on its website. The publication of agendas on the Town Council's notice boards and website gives parishioners the opportunity to make representation to the Council before agenda items are discussed. All formal representations received are responded to in writing.

5. Involvement in Partnerships

5.1. The Council is committed to partnership working where it will be of benefit to the parish, or to fulfil its statutory requirements.

6. Role of Council Members and Officers in Consultation and Community Engagement

6.1. Elected members are powerful advocates for their community and their leadership role enables them to have a major input into the consultation and engagement process.

6.2. Councillors are very accessible:

- Their contact details are published on the website, displayed in the Council office and occasionally in the newsletter.
- They are available to talk to parishioners during the public session prior to each Council meeting and at the Annual Parish Meeting.
- In a private capacity, they belong to many other local clubs, societies and organisations, where they may promote the work of the Council and be available to parishioners.
- Facilitate drop-in sessions within the community to listen to any suggestions or concerns raised by parishioners.

7. Community Engagement Guidelines for Councillors

7.1. When considering holding a drop-in session, visits to events and/or organisations, Councillors should consider the following guidelines:

- Two Councillors to be present for personal safety.
- Council ID badge should be worn.
- Awareness of the Council and Councillors remit, including where to signpost any queries raised by parishioners.
- Councillors represent the Council as the corporate body and work as a team, not as individuals in isolation.
- Resources and assistance to be provided by the Council office team to promote via the website and notice boards.
- If applicable, social media can be utilised as a channel of communication for promotion, however, the adopted Electronics Communication Policy should be adhered to.
- Consideration of locations, and how they may be perceived by parishioners in terms of resources and spending public money, if applicable.

- The Clerk to provide any guidance, if applicable.

8. Review

- 8.1. The Community Engagement Statement was presented to the Full Council, for approval and adoption on 26 March 2024, minute no. TC 23/275.
- 8.2. Future reviews will be carried out bi-annually or when any changes are made to related legislation, whichever is sooner.

9. References

- 9.1. Councillors Code of Conduct
- 9.2. Civility & Respect Pledge
- 9.3. Electronic Communications Policy
- 9.4. Council's Equality & Diversity Policy
- 9.5. National Association of Local Councils (NALC)