
WOODHURST PARISH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Woodhurst Parish Council is the closest tier of local government to the community.

The Parish Council wants to work closely with the public, including all residents, community groups and businesses, to encourage participation in decision making. The aim is to secure better services and to create a more active and informed community.

THE COMMUNITY

The Parish Council seeks to engage with **all** sections of the Woodhurst community including the young, the disenfranchised, the disaffected and the elderly as well as the parish church of St John the Baptist, the local business community, any clubs, organisations and societies which are active in the parish, its partners such as Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and the neighbourhood policing team. The Parish Council is also committed to engaging with any persons who appear to it to have an interest in matters relating to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the parish and its surrounding area.

INFORMATION TO THE COMMUNITY

The Parish Council lists details of all documentation available to the public under the Freedom of Information Act on the parish website www.woodhurst-cambs.com. This information is also available in hard copy from the clerk on request.

A regular Parish newsletter is delivered to all households in the parish together with the Annual Report which includes a statement of the accounts. The full accounts are available for inspection from the Clerk to the council. All agendas and minutes of meetings are available on the website

The Parish Plan (when published) will be available on the website and will detail the priorities for the Parish Council.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

All Parish Council meetings are open to the public and include a public session when residents can make representation to members. The Parish Councillors are also available for pre-booked "surgery sessions" on a bi-monthly basis where the public is given the opportunity to formally engage with councillors on topics that affect them. All councillors are available for informal discussion and their telephone numbers and their contact details are to be found in the newsletter, on Parish Council Noticeboards or on the website.

INVOLVEMENT IN PARTNERSHIPS

The Parish Council is committed to partnership working where it is clear that it will be of benefit to the parish or to fulfil its statutory requirements. The Parish Council works with both Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council to improve service delivery in the parish.

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR FORMAL REPRESENTATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

Representations to the Parish Council will normally be considered at the regular Council meetings, unless they require the provision of information only, when the clerk will provide it accordingly. The Parish Council has a Code of Practice for handling complaints, which is available from the clerk and on the website.

The publication of agendas on the Parish Council's website and notice board gives residents the opportunity to make representation to the council before agenda items are discussed. All formal representations received are responded to by letter or email.

ROLE OF COUNCIL MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

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. Woodhurst Parish Councillors are very accessible; their contact details are published on the website and in the regular newsletters to parishioners. They are available to talk to residents during the public session at the start of each Parish Council meeting and at the Annual Parish Meeting.

In a private capacity, councillors represent the Council on most of the Village Organisations, where they may, if they so wish, promote the work of the Parish Council and be available to parishioners.

Each Councillor has an email address specifically for contact regarding Parish Council matters and should respond to an email within 48 hours.

The clerk can be contacted by telephone or by email between the hours of 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

SPECIFIC AREAS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The council will consult the community should it resolve to undertake, initiate or facilitate any major projects or undertakings in the parish.