

HOLME VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

To achieve the Council's mission, aim and objectives, Holme Valley Parish Council needs to work closely with the public – residents, communities, businesses, schools, the principal authority, and voluntary organisations, clubs and groups. The Council's mission is to improve the quality of life of the residents of the Holme Valley, and its aim is to give added value to the residents of, and visitors to, the Holme Valley.

“Community engagement is about giving local people a voice and involving them in the decisions that affect them and their community. It is about the development of relationships and clear communications to deliver better services and projects.” QPS guide note June 2008

In working towards achieving its objectives, the Council must engage with all its communities and groups in as many ways as possible. The aims of this strategy are, therefore:

To represent and consult the residents of the Holme Valley to the best of its ability and knowledge:

- By involving residents wherever possible in projects and consulting residents about new ideas
- By striving to communicate with hard to reach groups
- By seeking the views of young people, where appropriate
- By utilising the Council's newsletter and website online polls to seek views
- By working with the University of Huddersfield on appropriate studies to gather information
- By funding and organising public meetings in the area, as and when appropriate

To communicate information to residents clearly, factually and appropriately through a variety of methods:

- By providing a website detailing Council services and activities
- By providing and delivering a quarterly newsletter to households
- By providing and delivering an annual report to households
- By the use of plain English and as little jargon as possible
- By providing clear contact details on all communications
- By adherence to a corporate design/logo

To improve communication with partner organisations, agencies and other authorities:

- By being actively involved, through Members, with Kirklees Council Area Committees for the area
- By regular communication with Kirklees Ward Councillors for the area, by way of provision of agendas for all meetings of the Council and its Committees
- By providing Kirklees Community Governance Service with details of all meetings
- By participating in joint meetings with Kirklees and all Parish and Town Councils in the Kirklees area
- By regular contact with services of Kirklees Council
- By liaising with local trade and business associations
- By being involved in various networking organisations (e.g. Yorkshire Local Councils Associations, Society of Local Council Clerks (Officers))
- By membership of the YLCA South Pennine Branch
- By informal networking with other Parish and Town Councils in the Kirklees area

To raise the image and reputation of the Council:

- By inviting residents to be actively involved in meetings via public open sessions
- By providing agendas and minutes for all meetings on the website, and on notice boards, regularly and promptly
- By encouraging use of the Council's website

By inviting residents/community groups to provide information for the Council's newsletter
By promoting awareness of the Council's activities through reports from grant recipients or from partner organisations about projects
By issuing press releases covering activities of the Council
By encouraging the Chairman and/or Vice Chairman of the Council to represent the community actively at as many events as possible

To enable every Councillor to maximise their role as elected representatives and Community Leaders:

By providing in-house training and an induction pack for all new Members
By encouraging Members to undertake external training in line with the Council's Statement of Intent on Training
By encouraging Members to attend meetings of community organisations and groups in their respective wards
By encouraging Members to represent the Parish Council on community organisations and groups, where appropriate
By encouraging Members to represent the Parish Council at community events

To ensure all Officers understand the Council's priorities:

By having annual Staff Development Reviews
By supporting Officers in undertaking training and regular updating by attendance at conferences, in line with the Council's Statement of Intent on Training
By actively supporting the Officers' Continued Professional Development (CPD)
By encouraging Officers to provide input into the decision making process

ENGAGEMENT

Individuals/groups/organisations with whom the Council wishes to engage:

- Residents of the Holme Valley
- Users of services provided by the Council
- Non-users and potential users
- Businesses and business organisations
- Community and residents' groups
- Interest and pressure groups
- Voluntary groups
- Communities and neighbourhoods
- Hard to reach groups
- Young people
- Public and private sector stakeholders
- Visitors to the area

ACTION PLAN

Chairman and Vice Chairman	Encourage Chairman and Vice Chairman to fulfil their civic role	Chairman, Vice Chairman and Officers	Ongoing
Chairman and Vice Chairman	Encourage community organisations to invite Chairman to events	Chairman, Vice Chairman and Officers	Ongoing
Agendas and Minutes	Ensure copies of agendas and minutes are available regularly and promptly in both hard copy and electronically for anyone interested	Officers	Ongoing
Annual Report	Ensure Annual Report is available both hard copy and electronically for anyone interested, in addition to copies for Royal Mail distribution	Editor of Annual Report and Officers	Annually
Newsletters	Produce and deliver a newsletter quarterly	Publications & Communications Committee Editor of Valley Voice and Officers	Quarterly ongoing
Website	Maintain website regularly and promptly with information on Council activities, contact details Council and Committee agendas and minutes	Publications & Communications Committee Webmaster and Officers	Weekly Ongoing
Surveys and Online polls	Promote surveys and online polls via Council's website and quarterly newsletters	Publications & Communications Committee Editor of Valley Voice, Webmaster and Officers	Quarterly Ongoing Further work re regular feedback from such surveys and polls
Weblog	Provide internet area linked to Council's website for online forum and weblog	Publications & Communications Committee, Webmaster and Officers	Under consideration but issues re moderation of such a facility
Social Media	e.g. Facebook and Twitter	Publications & Communications Committee, Webmaster and Officers	Not appropriate at moment; review annually
Office opening hours	Publicise office opening hours in newsletter and on website and on all public communications Details on notice on building	Officers	Ongoing
Public Open Session	Encourage residents to raise any matters of interest or concern via these sessions - Council (with Finance), Council (with Service Provision), Planning and Publications & Communications Committees	Members and Officers Editor of Valley Voice and Webmaster	Ongoing
Notice Boards	Regularly update notice board with latest agenda and Members' surgery information	Officers	Ongoing
Local Democracy	Encourage residents both to vote at and stand for Parish Council at local council elections	Members and Officers Editor of Valley Voice and Webmaster	Ongoing, but high priority in 6 months preceding local council elections

	Leaflet publicising Council activities	Officers	Prepared 2009
Members' surgeries	Regular quarterly surgeries for residents to raise concerns, queries, held at libraries on Saturday mornings	Members Officers - arrangements	Ongoing – kept under review to ensure locations and timings suitable
Local Schools	Initiate and develop an Adopt a Councillor/Adopt a School scheme to promote greater liaison between school councils, local residents and Council	Members and Officers	To be developed in next 12 months
School Councils/ Youth Groups	Develop better links with these groups by inviting to a Council meeting, or allowing them to hold a School Council Meeting in Council Chamber	Chairman, Vice Chairman, Members and Officers	To be developed in next 12 months
Businesses	Engage with local trade and business associations Develop links with new such associations by representation from Members	Members	Ongoing
Community Groups Residents Groups Interest Groups	Encourage greater links with such voluntary groups by Ward Councillors' attendance at meetings By appointing representatives where so invited	Members Members at Annual Council	Ongoing Annually
Press	Liase regularly with the press by sending details of Council and Committee meetings Raise awareness of Council activities by issue of more press releases	Officers Publications & Communications Committee – appointment of media adviser	<i>Ongoing</i> To consider 2012-13 (with any budget implications)
Annual Parish Meeting	Publicise as widely as costs permit Information in newsletter and on website to encourage public attendance Emphasise opportunity to raise matters of interest and concern	Members and Officers Webmaster and Editor of Valley Voice	Annually
Community events	Attendance at community events by Members on a Council display and stand	Publications & Communications Committee Officers – display material	Policy adopted in 2008-09 Ongoing development
University of Huddersfield	Discuss and liaise over suitable projects to seek views and help formulate further development of community engagement issues, e.g. community audit, forward plan, etc	University of Huddersfield staff Members and Officers	Awaiting feedback/outcome of Project in 2011-12

Sally S Barber, Clerk to the Council

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