



# Helston Town Council

## Community Engagement Policy

Reviewed: September 2023

Next Review: September 2024

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This document forms the Council's Community Engagement Policy. It sets out:

- The role of community engagement and its importance;
- How Helston Town Council engages the wider community and identifies the needs and aspirations of the community;
- How the Council can improve community engagement.

1.2 The objectives of this policy are to:

- Encourage effective local community engagement;
- Ensure that embedded throughout the Council there is a clear understanding of the need to engage with communities about decisions that affect them;
- Enable the aspirations/comments/suggestions etc obtained from community engagement to have an impact on decision-making and the way in which services are being delivered;
- Identify how the Council can enhance its profile by improving engagement with the wider community (with specific reference to hard to reach groups).

## **2.0 The Council's Commitment to Community Engagement**

2.1 Helston Town Council is committed to providing a democratic representational voice for the people of Helston and will engage with the local community in a proactive and meaningful way.

## **3.0 Community Engagement – An Overview**

3.1 Community engagement is concerned with giving local people a voice and involving them in decisions which affect them and their community. This may include individuals, voluntary and community organisations as well as other public sector bodies.

3.2 Community engagement provides an opportunity for local people to talk to the Council about their aspirations and/or needs in their community and neighbourhood. It allows the Council to consult with and inform people about what services it provides, how its priorities and policies are determined and how well it is performing.

3.3 Consultation forms an integral part of community engagement. Without Consultation, addressing a particular need is a hit or miss affair as there is no way of establishing what is required to address the problem. There are a wide range of consultation methods such as surveys, questionnaires and neighbourhood meetings.

## **4.0 Helston Town Council and Community Engagement**

### **4.1 The Council currently facilitates community engagement in the following ways:**

- Allocation of a 'Public Participation' session near the beginning of each Full Council meeting. This provides an opportunity for local residents to make representations to the Council or ask questions.
- Allocation of a 'Public Participation' session near the beginning of each Committee meeting. This provides an opportunity for local residents to make representations or ask questions relating to items on the agenda.
- Publishing contact details of all Council members and officers on the website.
- Council representation on outside organisations.
- Publication of regular newsletters highlighting local events and latest developments within the Council and the wider community (available on the website).
- Ensuring that agendas and minutes of Council and Committee meetings are available on the website or in hard copy on request.
- Uploading the Annual Report onto the website.
- Involvement in partnerships with the principal authority to improve community amenity areas (eg, Cades Parc Play Area, King George V Play Area)
- Consultation exercises with schools and local residents regarding the provision of play equipment.
- Formation of Joint Working Parties of Councillors and local residents.
- The use of surveys to seek public opinion.
- Informing members of the public of their Local Members in order that they can be represented at a local level.
- Press Releases are featured in local newspapers to keep the general public informed of community events, Town Council projects and other matters as necessary.
- Posting of local news and events on the Council's Facebook page and Twitter.
- The Town Council selects a Member as its representative on the South Kerrier Community Area Partnership.
- The Council has an office conveniently located in the town centre open from 9.00am until 4.00pm Monday to Friday.
- The Council's Youth Engagement Working Party regularly organises visits from the Primary Schools and Community College.

## **5.0 Communication**

5.1 Helston Town Council is committed to improving community engagement by:

- Continuing all the above activities and improving relationships with community groups including developing measures to harness the views and opinions of people and groups who are sometimes missed out of community engagement activities.
- Ensuring that any information published is clear, concise and widely available. This includes facilities for making information available in appropriate formats for people with visual impairments, learning disabilities, poor literacy or for those who require language translation.
- Identifying and embracing opportunities to work with community groups.
- Participating in local networks to share best practice of community engagement activities in other areas.
- Publicising the positive results that have been achieved from working relationships between the Council and other community groups in order to encourage new relationships/partnerships to be formed.
- Ensuring that appropriate evaluation is carried out following consultation exercises to ensure that lessons learned are carried forward.

## **6.0 Review**

6.1 This policy will be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary to reflect best practice.