

Herne & Broomfield Parish Council

Community Engagement Strategy

1. Aims and Objectives

The council's aims and objectives for seeking community engagement and the outcomes it hopes to achieve are:

Aims:

- Work more closely with residents, businesses and community groups;
- engage with as many people as possible who want to participate in decision-making, monitoring services and planning for the future;
- ensure that, by getting closer to the community and being accessible to all groups, local democracy is enhanced;
- ensure that through the use of a wide range of approaches to public involvement and community engagement, we actively encourage the involvement of residents, to capture their views and learn their concerns and effectively use those views as an integral part of the decision-making process;
- ensure that residents have the opportunities to be heard at every stage, and the capacity to be effective citizens.

Objectives:

This strategy is part of the council's commitment to creating and maintaining effective working relationships with all sectors of the community, based on trust, openness and constructive challenge. Outcomes of the strategy will include:

- Improved communication through the establishment of new channels of engagement.
- More residents understanding the role of Councillors and getting the best effect.
- Improved engagement with local communities, with more people feeling that they are involved in decision-making and a higher percentage of people involved in volunteering.
- Improved satisfaction with services provided by the Council.

2. Defining the Community

Herne & Broomfield is both an urban and rural Parish situated on the outskirts of Herne Bay. The principal authorities are Canterbury District Council and Kent County Council. There are a little over 3000 residential properties accommodating approximately 6203 electorate (as at 30 November 2009).

The community may be defined as consisting of residents of the parish; and

- Village Halls Trustees & its users,
- Head Teachers and Governors of Herne Infants & Junior Schools,
- Young people who live and/or go to school in the parish,
- Retail and other and Businesses in the community,
- Interest groups – clubs and societies e.g. Horticultural, Over 50's etc
- Voluntary organisations,
- Church Groups,
- Farming Community,
- Groups of people defined by a common factor such as age, disability, faith, and other groups,
- Councillors and public service representatives including Council Staff.

Role of Council Members and Officers

- The Parish is currently not party-political with 13 Councillors identified in the community, via newsletters, the website and published in the Council's annual report.
- There is one officer of the Council, (the Clerk/RFO) who covers the entire spectrum of the council work, and is currently based at Parish Office, Herne Mill, Mill Lane, Herne. Members of the public are welcome to call in or make appointments at mutually convenient times to visit the office. The officer is frequently dealing with meetings or in contact via email, telephone and letters etc.

Provision of Information to the Community

- Messages can be left 24/7 either by telephone or email.
- The names, addresses and phone numbers of all the Councillors are published on the website, in the 'Parish News' and in the Annual Report.
- The Parish Council website address is also widely published and the site contains all the information an individual might wish to know about the work of the Parish Council and its individuals, including meeting minutes, policy documents, financial statements, annual report and how to contact anyone associated with the Council.
- The council prints 'Parish News' on a quarterly basis and this is delivered to every household and business within the parish.
- Information, such as agendas of meetings, is published on the 6 notice boards around the parish and on the web site.
- The Police Beat Officer, Police Community Support Officer, CCC Ward Councillors and KCC Councillor and members of the press are invited to attend every Council meeting.
- An Annual Report is prepared and printed in the newsletter and on the web site.

Opportunities for Community Involvement

- It is recognised that members of the community may wish to engage with the Council at different levels - from the odd email or letter with a suggestion on how a service could be improved, to regular attendance at a Council meeting.
- To hold a monthly parish council surgery, which will allow members of the public to come and talk directly with council members.
- Parish Council meetings are open to the public and there is a public forum during each council meeting.
- An Annual Parish Meeting is held in either March or April, giving the public and local organisations an opportunity to participate in the full meeting. This meeting is advertised widely and is used by the Council to report on the work carried out during the year. It is also an opportunity for the Council to obtain the views of residents on any matter which affects the community.
- The council undertakes consultations by questionnaire, public meetings as appropriate, for specific issues.
- The Council is always considering practical ways of engaging with people and community groups.
- The Council will continue to arrange, support and participate in community events.

Involvement with Partnerships

The council has a representative on the following

- Partners and Communities Together (PACT)
- Herne & Broomfield Youth Club
- Kent Association of Local Councils
- Street Monitors
- Joint Transport Board
- Friends of Broomfield & Herne Ponds.
- Parish Council Police Forum
- Canterbury & District Parish Forum

Contact the Parish Council:

The Council and members may be contacted through the Parish Clerk:

Mrs Monica Blyth, Parish Office, Herne Mill, Mill Lane, Herne, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 7DR

Telephone: 01227 742700

e-mail: hbparishcouncil@talktalkbusiness.net

Website: www.herneandbroomfieldpc.kentparishes.gov.uk

This Statement of Intent for Community Engagement was approved for issue at the parish council meeting held on 7th January 2010.

Signed

Mr Tony Day, Chairman