

NORTHILL PARISH COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF INTENT AS TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

(WITH REFERENCE TO THE POWER OF WELL-BEING)

MAIN STATEMENT OF INTENT

Aims and Objectives

Northill Parish Council is an open and transparent Quality Status Council, which values the opinions of the community which it serves. It has in the past, and will continue to do so in the future, listen to the needs and concerns of that community, and will do everything within its power and financial constraints, to make Northill Parish a better place to live, and work.

Defining the Community

Northill Parish Council is keen to reach all groups and individuals who work, or live in the Parish. It has historical links with local Church Groups, P3 Steering Group, Village Halls, educational establishments and the many voluntary groups working for the good of the Parish, to ensure that as wide a cross section as possible of the community can have access to the Council, its Members, and its staff.

Provision of Information to the Community

Northill Parish Council has many avenues through which it communicates with its community. These include:

- A web-site that goes beyond the work of the Parish Council, and provides links to many other useful services, including the principal authority.
- An Annual Report which is delivered annually, via a newsletter, to every home in the Parish.
- A Parish Council Newsletter delivered quarterly to every home in the Parish.
- Publishing of agendas, on the six notice boards throughout the Parish, for all Council and committee meetings.
- Publishing of minutes, on the Council web site, for all Council and committee meetings.
- The Parish Council's involvement in the Annual Parish Meeting, with its public question time.
- The annual External Audit offers the opportunity for questions to be asked about the latest Statement of Accounts. A synopsis of the financial accounts is published within the Annual Report, and also in the June edition of the Parish Council Newsletter.

Opportunities for Community Involvement

Northill Parish Council will make every opportunity available to the electorate to ensure excellent community involvement. These will include the following methods:

- Parish Councillors hold regular evening surgeries before full Council meetings, which are publicised, for the electorate to have a private forum to raise issues.

- The Parish Council have a public forum session at every Council meeting, where the electorate can raise issues “in relation to the business on the agenda or request matters to be discussed at a subsequent meeting”.

Opportunities for Formal Representations to the Council

This “Statement of Intent” has elsewhere listed the many opportunities that exist for the public to make formal representations to the Parish Council. Issues received in writing, providing they are received before the deadline for closure of the agenda, are included as a stated item on the next agenda.

It is a target that correspondence received from a member of the public is at least acknowledged, wherever possible, within five working days.

Involvement in Partnerships

The Parish Council encourages and supports public meetings organised by the police, the health authority, Central Bedfordshire Council and other organisations where they feel information should be made available to the residents of the Parish.

Role of Council Members and Officers

As an open and transparent Parish Council, both Members and officers seek to offer a high quality professional service to all whom they serve. Both Members and officers are keen to maintain relevant Codes of Conduct in their business, and see the community as “customers” rather than an electorate.

Specific Areas for Community Involvement

Where there is a specific issue, or a new project, that the Parish Council wish to consider, it is of value to the Parish Council to seek the views of the community who will be most affected. The residents of the Parish can have confidence that their “voice” will be heard, and that the Council will work with the community to reach a common goal.

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Adopted by Northhill Parish Council on 26th October 2009