

LONGHOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

POLICY - COMMUNICATIONS AND CONSULTATION

1 The Need for a Communications and Consultation Policy

Longhoughton Parish Council is broadly responsible for carrying out the following activities:

- Delivering a limited range of services within their scope and constitution (See the Appendix for a comprehensive listing).
- Identifying the needs and issues faced by residents within the Parish and organising a plan to deliver the needs through the Parish Council and key service delivery organisations.
- Giving guidance on the solution to individual and community issues.

2 Objectives of the Communications and Consultation Policy

Fundamentally the Parish Council has to have a clear understanding of how best to communicate and consult with residents and all other groups including key stakeholders and other suppliers. It needs to obtain a thorough understanding of the needs and issues faced by residents. It can only achieve this by using an appropriate range of communication and consultation means along with an analysis of the outcomes. To achieve this, a policy has to be in place to communicate and engage with residents and to encourage their involvement in the process.

3 Methods of Communicating

A range of communication methods will be required to achieve the above objectives. Communications has to be two ways otherwise it is ineffective. It is envisaged that the following range of communication methods can be used:

- The 15 minutes prior to each meeting of the Parish Council
- Other open sessions at Parish Council meetings
- Public Meetings called to discuss specific proposals
- The Annual Parish Meeting
- The Annual Report
- Workshops and Drop-in sessions for specific proposals
- The Website including the NDP Website.
- Community Newsletter
- Special Newsletters
- Newspapers – The Northumberland Gazette
- Social Media – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as appropriate.
- Emailing to specific individuals and groups.
- Letters, posters or other material placed in the Noticeboards
- Specific meetings with key stakeholders and suppliers.

4 Consultation

Consultation is the process of obtaining the views of residents. Effective consultation requires excellent communications. Obtaining the views of people requires two way communications to be in place. It is suggested that the following methods of consultation are used to capture the views of residents.

- Surveys – On-line or on paper using Survey Monkey or other equivalent methods for recording responses and analysing the results.
- Drop-in Events and Workshops – People's views are recorded on a response form and collated by the use of Survey Monkey or equivalent.
- Public Meetings – Opinions received from discussion plus response forms completed. Collation of individual views by the use of Survey Monkey or equivalent.
- Requesting of views by email.

5 Feeding Back the Results of Consultation Events

Feeding back to residents the results of surveys/workshops/Drop-in events/public meetings/email requests, is essential so that residents can understand what views and opinions have been expressed. The 'feedback' method must be accompanied by a means for individuals to make further comments and for those comments to be recorded and consolidated when received.

6 Who is the Parish Council communicating with?

Overall we are trying to communicate with all resident families, businesses and community organisations within the Parish along with key service providers and stakeholders. These include:

Residents and other people who reside permanently or temporarily in the Parish

- Residents who live in the Parish full-time
- Residents who own a property in the Parish but are living elsewhere for employment reasons (possibly RAF personnel).
- Second home owners
- Static Caravan owners
- Holiday lets

Within each of these groups we will need to identify different age groups:

- The very young
- The Young
- Working age residents – families and individuals
- Older people
- Multiple households.

Businesses including

- Businesses of all types
- Fishermen, Farmers and land managers

Land owners

- Northumberland Estates
- Howick Trustees
- Defence Infrastructure Organisation

Public Authorities and Other Bodies including:

- NCC
- Northumberland Coast National Landscape
- RAF
- NHS
- Alnwick Medical Group
- Fire and Rescue Service
- Environment Agency
- Other Parish Councils
- Other public bodies as necessary

7 Responsibility for Communications and Consultations Policy.

The Parish Council as a whole will be responsible for ensuring that its operations comply with this policy.

8 Selection of Appropriate Means of Communications and Consultation

In relation to each project undertaken by the Parish Council or in relation to its routine operations, the Council will consider and select the most appropriate means for communicating and consulting with its residents and all others as appropriate.

This policy was approved at a meeting of Council on Monday 18 October 2021 and is effective as of that date. The policy will be reviewed periodically.

Longhoughton Parish Council reviewed and approved this policy with no amendments at a further meeting of the Council held on Monday 7 July 2024 and is effective as of that date.

Appendix

The powers and duties of parish councils.

Parish councils have a variety of powers and duties, all of which impact directly on the community.

The following are all under the remit of local councils:

- Allotments
- Burial Grounds, Cemeteries, Churchyards and Crematoria
- Bus Shelters
- Bye-laws – the power to make bye-laws concerning: baths and washhouses (swimming pools), cycle parks, mortuaries and pleasure grounds
- Clocks – public clocks can be provided and must be maintained
- Community Centres, Conference Centres, Halls, Public Buildings
- Drainage – of ditches and ponds
- Entertainment and the Arts
- Footpaths
- General Spending – parish councils can spend a limited amount of money on anything they deem of benefit to the community that is not covered by the other specific responsibilities described in this list
- Gifts – parish councils may accept gifts
- Highways – lighting, parking places, right to enter into discussions about new roads and road widening, consent of parish council required for diversion or discontinuation of highway, traffic signs and other notices, tree planting and verge maintenance
- Land – acquisition and sale of
- Legal proceedings – power to prosecute and defend any legal proceedings in the interests of the community, power to take part in any public enquiry
- Litter - provision of litter-bins and support for any anti-litter campaigns
- Planning – parish councils may be notified of any planning applications for the area
- Postal and Telecommunication Facilities – power to pay a public telecommunications operator any loss sustained in providing services in that area
- Public conveniences – provision and maintenance of public toilets
- Recreation – provision of recreation grounds, public walkways, pleasure grounds, open spaces, village greens, gymnasiums, playing fields, holiday camps and boating ponds
- Rights of Way – footpath and bridleway maintenance
- Seats (public)
- Signs – danger signs, place names and bus stops signs
- Tourism – financial contributions to any local tourist organisations allowed
- Traffic Calming
- War Memorials
- Water Supply – power to utilise stream, well or spring water and to provide facilities for general use