

STATEMENT OF INTENT AS TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. Introduction

Ticehurst Parish Council aims to provide services of high quality and to represent the interests of the area it serves to other bodies of all kinds. Its conduct is governed by statute. This statement outlines the Council's intentions with regard to community engagement.

2. The Community

2.1 The Council is directly responsible to the people of its area, who collectively form 'the community'. Within the community there are a variety of different bodies and the Council must therefore relate closely to those bodies as well as the community as a whole.

2.2 This latter group includes:

- Business and their representative bodies;
- Those who use the services provided by the Council, whether residents or not;
- Non-residents working in the Parish Council area;
- Visitors, whether tourists or those using the town's facilities and shops;
- Voluntary groups including church and youth organisations;
- Schools and other educational establishments;
- Other statutory bodies providing services within the Parish Council area.

3.

Aims and objectives

3.1

The Council aims to ensure that residents and the groups above are appropriately involved in the decision making process, particularly in relation to the provision of services and facilities irrespective of whether or not they are the direct responsibility of the Parish Council.

3.2

Whenever possible and practicable the Council will encourage the involvement of community members in order to identify their needs and concerns. To this end

the Council will maintain and develop effective working relationships with all sectors of the community in the expectation that this will lead to:

- Improved satisfaction with public services affecting Ticehurst Parish;
- A greater sense within the community that people are involved in decisions which affect them;
- Greater awareness within the community of the role and responsibilities of the Council.

4.

Opportunities for community involvement

4.1

As a matter of good practice the Council engages with the community in a variety of ways, including:

- Providing access to the Council's office twice a week - Tuesday mornings and Thursday afternoons, unless the Clerk is on holiday or working away from the office.
- A web-site Ticehurst-on-line which includes a wide range of information about the Council and its work as well as about the Council Members themselves;
- The publication of a regular newsletter;
- The publication of an Annual Report which summarises activities in the year in question including accounts;
- Displaying throughout the area the agendas for Council and Committee meetings, including a clear statement encouraging the public to attend;
- Advertising the annual timetable of all Council and committee meetings;
- Providing a specific period for public questions at the beginning of each Council meeting;

- Nominating Councillors to attend meetings of other organisations and groups.
- Organising the annual Parish Assembly open to all residents;
- Publishing contact details for councillors in the Annual Report and every newsletter.

5. Opportunities for formal representation to the Council

5.1 The Council may appoint advisors on specific areas of activity but, as indicated in the previous section, welcomes the attendance at meetings of individuals or organisations. On a day to day basis, the Parish Clerk is generally available to meet those who may wish to attend the office in order to discuss matters of interest or concern.

6. Involvement in partnerships

6.1 In addition to nominating, on an informal basis, representatives to attend meetings of voluntary groups and organisations, the Council often works in partnership with other organisations such as the Police, District and County Councils, where formal representation is required.

7. Specific areas for community involvement

7.1 The Parish Council leads in the arrangements for the Parish Assembly and may invite presentations from guest speakers on a topic of current and particular interest to the community.

7.2 From time to time particular topics arise which are of sufficient community wide interest to justify the organisation of a public meeting. The Council may also undertake consultation on a specific issue with a particular group.

8. Role of Council Members and Officers

8.1 Council Members (Councillors) are the elected decision makers of the Council. Members of the public are welcome to contact Councillors to raise any issues.

8.2 The Council's officers are staff who are employed to carry out the day to day functions of the Council and make sure that its services are provided for the local community. The Parish Clerk is the Proper Officer for the Council, which means he/she has overall responsibility for the provision of Council services.

Adopted 9th May 2017