

Dullingham Parish Council

Community Engagement Statement

PURPOSE

Dullingham Parish Council aims to engage with as many people as possible across the community, encouraging residents and local organisations to participate in decision-making, monitoring local services and planning for the future of the village.

The Council uses a range of engagement methods to understand local views, listen to concerns and take account of community priorities.

This policy reflects current good practice for parish councils in England by promoting openness, transparency, accessibility, inclusion, accountability and respectful participation in local democracy.

This policy applies to Parish Councillors, the Clerk, Council communications, consultations and other community engagement activity undertaken on behalf of Dullingham Parish Council.

ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The Parish Council will seek to ensure that engagement is fair, inclusive, accessible, transparent, proportionate and respectful. The Council will aim to use plain English, provide clear information, allow reasonable time for responses where practicable and encourage constructive participation in local democratic processes.

OBJECTIVES

- To ensure that the Parish Council is representative of, and responsive to, the whole community.
- To ensure that members of the community are aware of the work the Parish Council is undertaking on their behalf.
- To ensure that members of the community know how to contact councillors and the Clerk, raise matters of local concern and influence Parish Council decisions through appropriate democratic channels.
- To represent the interests of the whole community when working with other authorities, agencies and partners, and to seek fair outcomes for all members of the community.

THE COMMUNITY

Dullingham is a rural parish within East Cambridgeshire. The principal authorities are East Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. The Parish Council seeks to engage with all sections of the community, including residents, local groups, businesses, service users, young people, older residents, people with disabilities and those with limited digital access. It also seeks to hear from anyone who may be less likely to participate through traditional channels.

The Council will consider both online and offline communication methods so that residents are not disadvantaged by disability, age, lack of digital access or other practical barriers to participation.

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LIAISING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Dullingham Parish Council is non-political and has seven councillors. Details of councillors, the Clerk and contact arrangements are made available through the Parish Council website, noticeboard and other communication channels.

- The Council will provide regular information about its activities, priorities, decisions and finances through reports, newsletters, the website and the noticeboard.
- Newsletters and other community updates may be produced and shared with residents, including publication on the Parish Council website.
- Agendas, minutes, policies and other Parish Council documents will be published on the Parish Council website in accordance with statutory and transparency requirements.
- The Parish Council will use its noticeboard and website to publicise meetings. Agendas will normally be published at least three clear days before a Parish Council meeting, excluding the day of publication, the day of the meeting, Sundays and bank holidays. Draft or approved minutes will be made available as soon as practicable after meetings, subject to Council approval processes.
- The Clerk can be contacted by email, telephone or post. Contact details will be made available on the noticeboard, website and other appropriate communication methods.
- Parish Council meetings are open to members of the public, except where confidential matters must be considered in accordance with legal requirements. Residents may address the Council during the public participation session, subject to the Council's standing orders and the direction of the Chair.
- Where urgent or significant matters require community involvement, the Parish Council will use suitable communication methods, which may include the website, noticeboard, newsletters, direct notices, public meetings, surveys or consultation events.
- A welcome pack or equivalent information may be made available to new residents to help them understand local facilities, services and how to engage with the Parish Council.
- The Council will use plain English, avoid unnecessary jargon and consider accessibility when preparing public information, including the needs of residents who may not be able to access digital information easily.

INVOLVEMENT WITH PARTNERSHIPS

- County and District Councillors will be invited to attend Parish Council meetings and may receive agendas and minutes as appropriate.
- The Parish Council will promote and, where appropriate, support surveys and consultations undertaken by principal authorities and other relevant public bodies.

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- Councillors and officers of the Parish Council will liaise with members and officers of principal authorities on matters affecting the parish.
- Dullingham Parish Council will actively encourage engagement with local groups and organisations, including environmental, sports, school, village hall and other community interest groups within the parish.

SPECIFIC AREAS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Dullingham Parish Council aims to consult the community on:

- Planning applications affecting the community; environmental issues; conservation; footpaths and public rights of way; highways; community facilities; affordable housing; community-led planning; local services; and any other matter where community engagement is considered appropriate.

RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The Parish Council will consider community feedback in an open and proportionate way. Matters that fall within the Council's powers or responsibilities may be considered at a future meeting or referred to the relevant authority, partner organisation or local group. Where practicable, the Council will explain decisions and seek to show how community views have been considered, particularly following consultations on significant local matters.

DATA PROTECTION AND FORMAL REQUESTS

Where the Council collects personal information through surveys, consultations, correspondence or other engagement activity, it will handle that information in accordance with applicable data protection requirements and the Council's privacy arrangements. Complaints, Freedom of Information requests, Environmental Information requests and other formal correspondence will be handled through the relevant Council policy or statutory process.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Parish Council, supported by the Clerk, will review this policy at least annually to ensure that it remains effective, accessible and aligned with current legislation, guidance and good practice for parish councils.

FORMAL APPROVAL OF THIS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Approved by:

Dullingham Parish Council

Adopted: 7 November 2011

Reviewed: 3 July 2026