

Ludgershall Town Council



Community Engagement Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This document forms Ludgershall Town Council's (LTC) Community Engagement policy. It sets out the following:

1.1.1 The role of community engagement and its importance.

1.1.2 How LTC engages the wider community and identifies the needs and wants of the community.

1.1.3 How the Town Council can improve community engagement.

2. Policy Objectives

2.1 The objectives of the policy are to:

2.1.1 Encourage successful local community engagement.

2.1.2 Ensure that rooted throughout the council there is clear understanding of the need to engage with residents of Ludgershall about decisions that affect them.

2.1.3 Enable wants/comments/suggestions obtained from community engagement to have an impact on decision making and the way local services are being delivered.

2.1.4 Identify how the council can develop its profile by improving engagement with the wider community (with specific reference to hard to reach groups).

3. Community Engagement Overview

3.1 Community engagement is giving local people a voice and involving them in decisions which affect them and their community. It provides opportunities for local people to talk to the council about their wants and or needs in their community. It allows the

council to discuss with, listen to and explain to residents about what services it provides, how it prioritises, how policies are determined and how well it is performing.

- 3.2 The term **Stakeholder** refers to a wide range of people and groups (these might include residents, visitors, businesses, local government, voluntary organisations and public service organisations), all of which have an interest in the council's services and projects.
- 3.3 **Hard to Reach Groups** refers to those who experience social exclusion and are sometimes perceived as being disempowered. Some examples include; young people, elderly people, physical disability, language barriers, financial constraints, cultural differences, or social expectations. The Town Council will put effort into seeking their views, but it also recognises that sometimes these individuals, or groups may have excluded themselves through personal choice.
- 3.4 The key elements of Community Engagement include:
 - 3.4.1 Development of relationships between council, individuals, voluntary and community groups to build trust and understanding by consistent interaction with those stakeholders.
 - 3.4.2 Clear and open communication to ensure that information is made accessible to all groups.
 - 3.4.3 Listening and understanding from a range of people to identify the wants, needs and problems of local people and groups.
- 3.5 Effective Community Engagement ensures that:
 - 3.5.1 The Council will be informed of the problems and needs of local people, in order that appropriate, new or improved facilities or services can be provided.
 - 3.5.2 Those participating feel invested and listened to by being involved in decision making in their local community.
 - 3.5.3 This may result in enhanced leadership and greater interest in elections and standing for Council.

4. What Community Engagement Looks Like for Ludgershall

- 4.1 The Town Council will facilitate Community Engagement in the following ways:
 - 4.1.1 Make available information on what decisions are being considered and how residents can influence or contribute to the discussions in good time.

- 4.1.2 Utilising a variety of engagement methods to ensure engagement will be accessible through means such as the Town Council website, noticeboards, the Town Council's Newsletter, Parish News, Facebook, posters, consultations, surveys, reports, emails (where permission is given) and word of mouth.
- 4.1.3 All meetings of the Town Council and its Committees remain open to the public and press, at each meeting there is a period set aside for residents to speak in line with the Council's standing orders. Exceptions may occur under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.
- 4.1.4 Residents can access agendas for meetings via the Town Council website and notice boards, public agendas are also made available at the meetings of the Council and its Committees.
- 4.1.5 The Town Council website, and Public Participation Policy provided at meetings explains the procedure for residents wishing to speak at meetings. Facilities also exist where residents can, where appropriate or necessary, make written or verbal reports or present petitions to Councillors to go on to an agenda if necessary.
- 4.1.6 Planning applications are considered at Council meetings, which are held twice a month. The opportunities for people to speak applies equally to these agenda items. Equal opportunity is given to applicants, supporters, objectors and local community groups.
- 4.1.7 The Town Clerk's office is required to play a neutral role so that residents can be fully involved and be confident they are receiving unbiased information and support. This neutral involvement will allow more flexibility in the service and the personal element of the contact will hopefully encourage more involvement from the hard to reach members of the community.
- 4.1.8 Details of how to contact the Town Clerk's office will be displayed in all meeting notifications and agendas. Details of how to contact Councillors will be displayed on noticeboards and on the Town Council website.
- 4.1.9 A list of annual Council and Committee dates including the start times of the meetings and agenda distribution dates can be found on the Council website, and all noticeboards, if known in advance.

- 4.1.10 The Town Council will be open and accountable in its dealing with residents and the community. It will make information on its policies and procedures freely available.
- 4.1.11 The Town Council will, where practicably possible, be receptive to requests from residents or communities and will attempt to be flexible in order to ensure their opinions are known, not only to the Town Council but also to other organisations where appropriate. This may be by including an item for discussion on an agenda, or allowing a local group to put their opinions into an official report undertaken by the Town Council.
- 4.1.12 The Town Council office is also a Community Hub whereby local people can have help with finding information and contacts for their queries, and also use computers for information searching. The Hub also offers access to a free meeting rooms for local organisations, small businesses, the police and other community minded groups to have meetings in.
- 4.1.15 Town Councillors will continue to represent the Council on various outside bodies, to ensure that they are kept informed of the communities' needs.

5. Communication

- 5.1 Ludgershall Town Council is committed to improving community engagement by:
- 5.1.1 Continuing all the above activities and services into the future and improving relationships with community groups, including developing measures to harness the views and opinions of people and groups who often miss out of community engagement activities.
- 5.1.2 Being proactive and willing to consider any reasonable opportunities that support the purpose of making information available and increasing contributions from the community, especially those difficult to reach.
- 5.1.3 Considering the holding of a public meeting when dealing with controversial issues that affect the community.
- 5.1.4 Consider holding consultations and surveys when necessary and appropriate, and make results available.
- 5.1.5 Identifying and embracing opportunities to work with other local community groups when the need arises.

5.1.6 Promoting elections, and the importance of the democratic process, and the value of being a Councillor.

5.1.7 Promoting the value to the Town of volunteering.

5.1.8 The Town Council will review its Community Engagement Strategy on an annual basis to ensure that it remains relevant.

6. Outcomes

6.1 The outcomes which we are striving for and for which the success of this policy will be measured are:

6.1.1 Improved communication through the establishment of new channels of engagement.

6.1.2 More residents understand the role of Councillors and getting the best result.

6.1.3 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.

6.1.4 Improved satisfaction with services provided by the Council.

END

Administration of the LTC Community Engagement Policy

A1. Review Date

This policy will be reviewed every four years, or when there are any legislative changes that may affect this policy.

A2. Version Control

Version	Approved	Date	Adopted	Date	Comments
V1	Finance & Policy Committee	2 nd Oct 25	FTC February 2026	9 th Feb 26	Initial Copy

END