



**PILSLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

# **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

<b>POLICY STATEMENT REFERENCE NUMBER</b>	<b>ADOPTED DATE</b>	<b>REVIEW DATE</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>4 July 2022</b>	<b>July 2025</b>

# **Statement of Community Engagement**

## **Introduction**

Pilsley Parish Council is the tier of local government which is closest to the local community. Because of this, it is able to develop good links with residents and to respond to their needs and aspirations quickly and effectively.

The Council and the individual Councillors elected to serve on it play a vital role as they make decisions about services and facilities in the village which affect the quality of life both for residents and for those who work in or visit the village. We aim to make a positive difference to the quality of life in our community.

This statement outlines how we strive to ensure that the community is kept informed about and is able to contribute to the activities and decision-making of the Council for the benefit of everyone associated with the village.

## **Purpose**

Pilsley Parish Council strives to be an open and transparent Council, which values the opinions of the community which it serves and makes information about the Council's activities and expenditure readily available to the public. We will regularly publish and update this information, invite comments and listen to the needs and concerns of our residents and will do everything within our powers and financial constraints to make Pilsley a better place to live, and work.

## **Our Parish Community**

Pilsley Parish Council is keen to ensure that all groups and individuals who work or live in the Parish are not excluded from participating in village life or decisions made about services and facilities in the Parish. The Council recognises that following as comprising our local community.

- All residents.
- All those who work, whether permanently or temporarily, in the parish.
- All those who own businesses in the village.
- All young people who live in or go to school in the community.
- All local clubs, societies and voluntary organisations.
- All users of our sporting and recreation facilities; and
- Any groups or organisation that represent the interests of members of our community.

## **Provision of Information for the Community**

Pilsley Parish Council has a range of tools which it uses to communicate with residents in the local community, including: -

- An interactive web-site which contains all the information anyone might wish to know about the work of the Parish Council including policy documents, agendas for and meeting of all minutes, financial statements, annual reports and the contact details of

all councillors. It also includes links to other organisations including the County and District Councils, the MP and information about local events. The website also notes the latest news and any formal notices the council has to publish.

- The Council publishes and circulates a parish newsletter four times each year to update residents on current projects, activities and events.
- Four notice boards are provided around the village and important information is posted regularly in these. These are particularly useful for residents who do not use computer facilities and are used every month to give notice of council meetings and information about agendas.
- Each time the Council posts a new news story on the website it is also forwarded to the local press.
- An archive of all minutes from council meetings is maintained on the website and copies can be made available on request to the Parish Clerk.
- The Council publishes an Annual Business Plan which gives details of its priorities for the coming year together with information on the level of expenditure which the Council anticipates making during the year. This document is available to download from the Council's website.

### **Opportunities for the Community to Engage in Our Business**

Pilsley Parish Council will strive to create every opportunity for local people to get involved with and influence the decisions of the Council, including: -

- An open public session at the beginning of the monthly Council meeting, where residents can raise issues about the items listed on the agenda or ask for matters to be discussed at a future meeting.
- Hosting of an Annual Parish Meeting, which anyone can attend and raise any general issues which they feel affects the quality of life in the Parish.
- Formal publication of the annual External Audit of the Council's financial affairs offers an opportunity for residents to scrutinise the financial standing and governance of the Council.
- Public meetings are often held on specific topics that are of local importance in order to gauge public opinion and gain a deeper understanding of residents' priorities.
- With regard to proposals for specific projects or major change in the village (such as whether or not there is a demand in the parish for a skatepark or whether to repair or demolish the sports pavilion), the Council will hold consultation events or focus groups over a period of time and invite sections of the community to participate who we feel would have a view on or interest in such proposals;
- Via contact through the website, which contains the contact details of the Clerk and all councillors.
- An annual timetable of meetings is published in May each year and posted both in the parish notice boards and on the website.
- The Council has both Twitter and Facebook accounts and will post information (and invite comments) via these media on a regular basis.
- All of our councillors live or work in the community and you will see them in local shops and at local events, so do not hesitate to make direct contact with them if you have a query.

### **Opportunities for Formal Representations to be made to the Council**

Formal representations can be made at any time to the Clerk in writing or by e-mail. All council meetings have a 20 minute public participation session at the start of every agenda. The web site also provides an opportunity to contact the Clerk.

### **Partnerships and Advocacy**

Pilsley Parish Council will work proactively with other organisations working in the parish to strengthen and improve working relationships across all organisations, local businesses and voluntary groups, e.g., with Rykneld Homes on 'estate walkabouts' to identify any issues that need to be addressed on the main housing estates in the parish. Where the parish council is not directly responsible for a service which a resident wishes to raise a query about, we will often be able to signpost them to the relevant organisation who will be able to deal with the issue.

Parish councillors will also act as advocate for local residents on local services that are delivered by other public bodies such as the County or District Council.

### **Council Members and the Clerk**

Councillors are the elected decision-makers of the Parish Council. There are 11 elected to the Council every four years. They represent the community and bring issues to council meetings for decisions to be made. Their contact details are available on the noticeboards, website, in newsletters, in the Annual Report or via the Clerk. Members of the public may contact Councillors at any time to raise any issues.

The Parish Clerk is employed (part-time) by the Parish Council to carry out the day to day functions of the Council and has overall responsibility for the management of services provided by the Council. The Clerk will also advise the Council on the powers it has available to carry out its functions and to develop any new services or initiatives. At Pilsley Parish Council the Clerk also acts as the Responsible Finance Officer and is responsible for ensuring that the finances of the Council are managed properly and in accordance both with legal requirements and the financial regulations adopted by the parish council.

Contact details for all councillors and the clerk are posted on the council's website:

[www.pilsleyparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.pilsleyparishcouncil.org.uk)

**END**