



Parish Clerk

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**Framwellgate Moor Parish Council
Community Engagement Policy**

Details

Policy	Adopted	Author
Community Engagement	March 2024	TBC

Version

Date	Ref	History	Revised by
20/02	V1		John Turnock

Review

Review	Last Review	Next Review	Principal Reviewer
Annually	March 2025	March 2025	

1. SCOPE

This policy sets out the role of community engagement and its importance, how Framwellgate Moor Parish Council ("FMPC") engages the wider community and identifies the needs / aspirations of the community and how FMPC can improve community engagement.

Community engagement is concerned with giving local people a voice and involving them in decisions which affect them and their community. This may include individuals, voluntary and community organisations as well as other public-sector bodies.

It provides opportunity for local people to talk to FMPC about their aspirations and / or needs in their community and neighbourhood.

It allows FMPC to consult with and inform people about what services it provides, how it prioritises, how policies are determined and how well it is performing.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the policy are to: -

- encourage effective local community engagement
- ensure that embedded throughout FMPC there is clear understanding of the need to engage with communities about decisions that affect them.
- enable aspirations / comments / suggestions obtained from community engagement to have an impact on decision making and the way services are being delivered.
- identify how FMPC can enhance its profile by improving engagement with the wide community (with specific reference to hard-to-reach groups).
- encourage feedback whether positive or negative in order that: -
 - ❖ the problems and needs of local people are clearly identified so that appropriate new or improved facilities / services can be provided.
 - ❖ those participating feel empowered by being involved in decision making in their local community.
 - ❖ there may be enhanced leadership and greater interest in elections and standing for FMPC.

3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The key aspects of community engagement include: -

- development of a network of relationships between FMPC, individuals, voluntary and community groups.

- clear, honest, and open communication to ensure that information is made accessible to all groups.
- listening and understanding from a range of people to identify aspirations, needs and problems of local people and groups.
- providing accurate and unbiased information that sets out the significance of the issues and makes it clear what can be influenced by parishioners and when parishioners input is particularly required.

4. FMPC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

FMPC will facilitate community engagement in the following ways: -

- by holding an Annual Parish Meeting to allow residents to question and review how the elected members help shape the community. The main objective of the annual meeting must be to.
 - ❖ provide and encourage two-way communication between the community and Councillors.
 - ❖ provide opportunities for parishioners to have their say about decisions, services, and plans.
- All meetings of the Parish Council and its Committees are open to the public and press.
- Residents can access agendas for meetings via the FMPC website and noticeboard which can also be collected from the Parish Office by appointment.
- The FMPC policy “Public Participation”, available on the website explains the procedure for residents wishing to speak at meetings. Equal opportunity to speak is given to applications supporters, objectors, and local community groups.
- Facilities also exist where residents can, where appropriate or necessary, make written reports, present petitions or have a case presented on their behalf to Councillors.
- Making relevant information available on what decisions are being considered and how residents can influence or contribute to the discussions in good time. Methods used to ensure engagement will be through.
 - ❖ the FMPC website
 - ❖ notice board.
 - ❖ Notices
 - ❖ Agendas
 - ❖ parish newsletter
 - ❖ word of mouth
 - ❖ having stalls at village events and such other methods as FMPC considers appropriate.

- Planning matters are normally on the agenda for full Council meetings. If an application is considered contentious or there are issues involved this can be considered by the Planning working group between full Council meetings. If immediate action is deemed to be necessary Councillors can be contacted by email, or other electronic means, for a decision.
- The Parish Clerk's Office is required to play a neutral role so that residents can be fully involved and be confident that they are receiving unbiased information and support.
- Details of how to contact the Parish Clerk's Office are shown on the FMPC website.
- FMPC will produce and publish on its website a list of the scheduled Council meeting dates in the coming year to include the start times of the meetings. Before each meeting the agenda will be published.
- FMPC will be open and accountable in its dealings with residents and the community. It will make information on its policies and procedures freely available.
- FMPC will be receptive to requests from residents of the community and will attempt to be flexible in order to ensure their opinions are known not only to FMPC but also to other organisations.
- Councillors will continue to represent FMPC on various outside bodies, where applicable to ensure that they are kept informed of the communities' needs.

5. COMMUNICATION

FMPC is committed to improving community engagement by: -

- 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 are often missed out of community engagement activities.
- being proactive and willing to consider any reasonable opportunities that support its purpose of obtaining information and increasing contributions from the community, especially those difficult to reach.
- considering, when dealing with controversial issues that affect a particular community, whether to hold a public meeting or some other suitable form of public consultation.

- considering holding, when necessary and appropriate, consultations and surveys with results being made available.
- continuing to work with others to produce and review community led policies such as the Neighbourhood Plan.
- identifying and embracing opportunities to work with other local community groups when the need arises.
- publicising the positive results that have been achieved from working relationships between FMPC and other community groups in order to encourage new relationships / partnerships to be formed and to raise community spirit.
- promoting elections and the importance of the democratic process and the value of being a Councillor.
- promoting the value to the Parish of volunteering.

6. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed by the incoming Parish Council after each periodic local Government election.