

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (CE) POLICY

Stansfield Parish Council Mission Statement is:

All councillors are dedicated to full and open representation of parishioners' views in a spirit of friendliness and harmony in our part of this beautiful historic countryside.

1 Purpose of CE Policy:

To improve SPC's awareness and understanding of residents' views and needs as they develop on an ongoing basis, and to enable SPC to take into account the widest possible range of views of residents when making representations to other bodies like our MP, WSC and SCC.

The Community Engagement Policy aims to define, improve, extend and promote the opportunities residents have to gain information in order for them to formulate their own views and to have them taken into account in debates, decisions and representations about their village. It aims to ensure complete transparency in the parish council's affairs, to build on trust. And for all communications to be straightforward and direct to encourage interest and involvement with village affairs.

Collaboration. Consultation. Communication

2 Scope:

2a) What Issues and When to consult, and potential obstacles:

Village Views, Opinions and Needs in General:

including what residents value in their life in the village and what they feel might improve their life in Stansfield; what issues are important to residents and what actions they might like SPC to consider taking.

This issue to be placed on the agenda of every AGM of SPC, and a discussion held on the range of topics here, based on views gathered at events and meetings etc during the year. Overcoming apathy and encouraging input to be an important point of debate..

2b) Immediate Issues

When SPC is asked to comment on behalf of the village in a specified timeframe (e.g.: Local Plan stages and individual planning applications), SPC will inform* residents of the need for their input on such issues in time for the PC to take these into account in making any submissions to other bodies.*Methods of communication may include noticeboard, website, Facebook, magazine articles and leaflets to households if deemed appropriate.

2b)Methods of Engagement

SPC will use a wide range of methods to engage with the community. These methods include: Parish Pump newsletter articles, SPC website, Village Facebook page, public sessions at PC meetings, face-to-face contact with individuals or by telephone, and can include, when appropriate, flyers to each household, and single-focused or general questionnaires.

Councillors will also help to organise, and be present to gather views at, at least three specified village events per year.

The parish Council recognises that, for many reasons, some residents will not, or cannot attend meetings, do not or will not use Facebook; some prefer face to face contact, others do not etc. The methods listed above will be used simultaneously to ensure as wider engagement with the whole community as possible:....thinking here about many issues eg. those who cannot attend meetings or find them daunting, those with disabilities/medical issues, those who cannot or will not use Facebook etc. The Parish Council will endeavour to discover and log what methods best encourage/help each resident to engage.

NB: SPC have reduced the number of formal parish council meetings per year from six to four, and instead held three informal theme-based events at which they have also gathered residents' views on village issues. Annual discussion will be held at the PC AGM on whether this is working better.

2c) Reviews of current SPC contact opportunities and methods.

Information given out by SPC:

What information is given, when, and how it is delivered (e.g. notice of meetings, minutes etc). Website content. Contact information for parish council and councillors. Work with other village organisations, the Village Hall and Good Neighbours, which will have nominated PC representatives.

A nominated councillor will collate any views given to the Council by residents, and also review the website and noticeboard contents each month to ensure they are kept up to date and appropriately informative. One aim will be to place an article in the Parish Pump magazine in most months. The Parish Clerk will aim to ensure the agendas are normally posted a week before meetings, and minutes produced within one month.

3 Feedback Policy :

The Community Engagement(CE) Policy aims to increase inclusiveness in debate and decisions so it follows that residents will be able to access any results and comments from any events or surveys undertaken, even though the reviews given may remain anonymous. NB: We note for instance that the results of the Wickhambrook housing needs survey and a general survey of village views conducted in Jan/Feb 2022 were published within two months, including **all individual*** comments made, so residents could understand the needs and views in their village. Similar exercises, some part of Neighbourhood Plan exercises, but others not so, have been undertaken in Glemsford and many other parishes. (* Individual comments were published anonymously.)

4. Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed by SPC at their AGM each year, along with a discussion on how effectively it is felt that residents' views are gathered to be representative of the village as a whole, and to fulfil the PC mission statement.

Participants in drafting and reviewing the CE Policy: All members of SPC plus interested residents, esp. those with relevant skills and experience, and to cover all areas of the village and age ranges.