

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Antrobus Parish Council

Introduction

This document outline the councils commitment to hearing what people in the community think, and to communicating its own actions and decisions

Hearing what people in the community think

- a) The council holds an open forum before the start of every public main meeting where villagers are welcome to bring any topic to the attention of the council.

Decisions are made in the main meeting relating to the issues raised, but as per standing orders villagers can't speak at that time unless invited by the chairman.

The open forum is advertised on noticeboards and online when the agenda or notice of meeting is published.

- b) Parishioners are encouraged to contact the clerk on any issue relevant to the parish and these are then reported to the council.
- c) Every year in the legally required time period (usually at the same time as the Annual Parish Council meeting), an Annual Parish meeting is held under the chairmanship of the council chairman. This is a parish, not council, event and any topic can be raised and decisions can be made by the voting of all villagers present. (see annual minutes)
- d) Occasionally, major topics, such as a planning developments with significant impact on the community, require public meetings to gather opinions from a wide section of the population.
- e) Occasionally questionnaires may be used to gather views on specific council initiatives. They can be distributed via the village shop and an advert in the village news. For example, the Playground extension project (2015) gathered views on the need for further facilities.
- f) Every 5 – 10 years a Parish Plan may be updated or a neighbourhood or similar plan developed which would involve significant canvassing of opinions through questionnaires and other methods.
- g) A grant awarding policy exists and local organisations are welcome to apply for a small grant through an application form.

Communicating the councils actions and decisions

- a) The council advertises the dates of its meetings on noticeboards and online and publishes an agenda and notice of meeting ahead of the meeting (3 clear days).
- b) The council makes decisions at its main meeting and reports them in the minutes. The minutes of the meeting are published on the noticeboards and online and a summary of the draft is placed in the monthly village news.

- c) Any topics of particular current concern may have a further item published in the village news. For example a notice about parking or picking up dog faeces to encourage more considerate behaviour.
- d) The annual accounts, which include a summary of spend against various activities, are summarised in the minutes and published online and on noticeboards.
- e) The chairman completes an annual report which summarises the achievements of the council in the previous year. This is presented at the Annual Parish Meeting and published in the minutes and in the village news.

Typical activities of the council

a) Lobbying principal authorities

Highways – reporting faults to CW&C and chasing solutions from hedge cutting, ditch clearance, flood repairs and management to speed management.

Planning – Providing a view on all planning applications as a consultee. Relevant Local knowledge is fed back to the borough council. On occasions the council request the Ward Councillor takes an item to Planning Committee and then the council will make representation in Chester. They also submit documentation for any Inspectorate appeals. More significant projects may require public meetings and a parish Plan update or Neighbourhood plan would require canvassing of the community.

CW&C Consultation – e.g. CW&C land allocation survey, Flood strategy, lobbying of Ward Councillors.

b) Lobbying of other organisations

Road and transport issues: bus services, road and cycling races

Affiliations – ChALC, Rural Broadband, Homewatch, Police, Antrobus4Youth, Village Hall & Fete, Affordable Housing, Manchester Airport.

c) Service provision:

Playground – inspection, maintenance and development.

Antrobus Community Kitchen Garden – provides a recreation and sells fruit

Community Pride – Best kept village competition, funding planting

Annual Litterpick

d) Grant awards

e) Helping with community events

Support of Annual events – Fete procession and Remembrance service

Support of key events or initiatives – Queens Jubilee, VE Day, St Mark's roof appeal.

Version history

Sep 2015 - First draft