

# STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

## Aims and Objectives

Little Waldingfield Parish Council (“Council”) is committed to high standards of engagement with its community. Our council is part of a tier of local government which belongs to, is part of and is directly accountable to its local community. Councillors play an important role as they are elected to make decisions on matters affecting the village. We aim to make a measurable difference to the quality of life of the community we serve and to be responsive to the needs of our community. This statement sets out how we ensure the community is kept informed about and can contribute to the activities and decision-making of this council to the benefit of the Council.

## What is Our Community?

We believe our community is everyone within the boundaries of our parish including all ages, any organisations, groups and individuals within it. We also recognise that residents pay for the activities of the Council and that visitors to our community form an important part of the vibrancy of community life. We understand that there are certain bodies that are crucial to local quality of life and we will strive to achieve excellent working relationships with these bodies including village organisations, the Police, neighbouring councils and other tiers of local government.

## Provision of Information to the Community

This Council ensures that its main documents which reflect its decisions are published and readily available for the public to view. These documents include the agendas, minutes and annual reports of the council which are:

- Published on the council's website
- Posted on the notice board
- Available to view by request and prior arrangement with the Clerk, or in the 15 minutes before council meetings

The council also summarises its activities and reports them to the **Press** and in the Box River News. You can view the councils Freedom of Information Publication Scheme on the council's website.

## Opportunities for involvement and representations to the Council

The agenda for full council meetings contain an invitation to the public and press to attend and gives you an indication of the business to be transacted so that you can decide whether you want to attend or make your views known by some other means prior to the meeting. Meetings are the forum for business and decision-making and it is important that this business can be conducted with ample time for due consideration of issues before councillors. However, at council meetings there is also an opportunity for the public to make representations in person prior to decisions being made. We welcome representations but inevitably have to apply a time limit and if you are concerned that there might be insufficient time to make your points known, you might wish to make representations in writing prior to the meeting. We give representatives from the Police and other tiers of local government an opportunity to make reports to full council meetings. This provides the public and councillors with more information and an opportunity to ask questions on matters of interest to them.

The Council will also call an annual meeting of the parish on a day falling between 1 March and 1 June inclusive. This is your meeting and you will have an opportunity to hear from many community organisations and to ask them questions. It is also possible to raise matters of concern to the community.

## **Involvement in Partnerships**

The Council has representation on the Little Waldingfield Playing Field Committee and the Suffolk Association of Local Councils and attends many meetings of bodies which make decisions affecting the local community. Information obtained from these meetings is reported to full council meetings.

## **Role of councillors**

Councillors are the decision-makers of the Council. The contact details for all councillors are available from the clerk and are also published on the council's website and the notice board. Councillors also hold the Clerk to account. Councillors welcome contact with members of the public, endeavour to be available immediately prior to council meeting for anybody who wishes to speak with them and they will listen to the representations you make to them at council meetings whether you attend in person, ask another person to raise matters for you or provide your comments in writing.

The contact details for the Clerk to the council are published on the council's website and the notice board. The Clerk is the Proper Officer of the council and is the appropriate contact in most cases for raising matters with or requesting information from the council.

Please feel free to contact to contact the Clerk for more information on anything in this Statement.

## **Specific Areas for Community Involvement**

In some circumstances, we also provide additional information sheets and/or provide additional public meetings in the event that exceptional issues arise which are of particular interest to the community. We envisage that these might include plans for significant planning development, exceptional spending plans and any emergency situations that arise. We will also hold public meetings in our ongoing communication with all residents on their requirements of the Council.

### **Contact details for the council are:**

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| Address   | Cragston, Sudbury Road, Newton, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 0QH  |
| Telephone | 01787 375085   |
| Email     | <a href="mailto:clerk.littlewoldingfieldpc@hotmail.co.uk">clerk.littlewoldingfieldpc@hotmail.co.uk</a> |
| Website   | <a href="http://www.littlewoldingfield.onesuffolk.net">www.littlewoldingfield.onesuffolk.net</a>       |

This policy was adopted by Little Waldingfield Parish Council at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016