

Clerk: Tracey Kunne
Deputy Clerk: Glynis Smith

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Introduction

Thurmaston Parish Council has developed a community engagement strategy with the aim of constructing a better standard for engagement with its residents and partners.

It is recognised that the services it provides must reflect the needs of its parishioners and the locality.

Thurmaston Parish Council strongly believes that:-

- Residents should be involved in decisions affecting them and their neighbourhood and in shaping the future of their parish.
- The community deserves a high quality of public services, designed around their needs.
- The importance of community capacity building and the need to provide appropriate opportunities for residents to participate at whatever level they wish to influence service delivery, decision making and policy development.

Aims

The aim of the strategy is to improve the way in which the Council engages and consults its residents and partners on important issues by:-

- Informing, consulting and involving.
- Being inclusive and engaging with all of its residents and partners.
- Ensuring all views are listened to and where appropriate used to develop, enhance and improve services, the environment and the quality of life for residents.

Objectives

- To improve, plan and shape the future of the parish according to local needs and priorities.
- To strengthen, develop and sustain opportunities for local people to influence what happens in the community.
- To improve the quality and delivery of services.
- To use engagement to inform decision making, ensuring decisions are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the parish.
- To enhance the well being of the parish.
- To be a stronger, more active and cohesive parish.

How this will be achieved

Community engagement will be achieved by Thurmaston Parish Council by communicating, supporting, consulting and working together with its residents.

Communication

Communicating with members of the parish will be achieved in several ways to ensure all sections of the community are reached:-

The Parish Council Website/Elizabeth Park Website has a wealth of local information and is updated on a regular basis. Important notices and special events will continue to be added regularly. Minutes of all Parish Council meetings are also included on the website. A reporting form is available for any issues wished to be raised, or report any faults by the residents of the parish.

The Thurmaston Times, this is delivered to every house in Thurmaston, it informs residents on important issues within the community assists with the promotion of consultations and includes articles on topical issues.

Meetings of the Council and Standing Committees, are open to the public and include an opportunity for members of the parish to engage with

councillors. All meetings include an adjournment for public participation and monthly councillors drop in surgeries are also held.

Consultation

Consulting parishioners on important issues will be key to the strategy. It will ensure that the wider community as well as those most affected are able to put forward an opinion and given an opportunity to make a difference.

Ensuring consultations include all members of the parish by identifying the hard to reach groups eg. youths, the elderly, the disabled, the household, ethnic minorities etc. who possibly require different engagement channels for them.

Support

To support local projects and participate in local events to raise the awareness of the Council and its objectives and aims.

To support local organisations and engage with them will assist them in meeting their own aims and objectives.

To support members of the parish in shaping the future of their parish will bring about a more cohesive community.

Acting Together

Acting together in decision making and policy drafting will ensure they have a voice and can make a difference.

Acting together to carry out agreed action plans, will engage the community in working with the Council to enhance the environments and the quality of their lives.

Acting together with residents and partners in finding solutions to local problems, will ensure they will be accepted and fit for purpose.

Measuring Success

Success will be measured in several ways including:-

Formal reviews of consultation outcomes

Monitoring residents' participation in consultation processes and increases in their involvement in local projects and events.

Strategy Reviews

Annual reviews of the consultation processes and results will be used as a continual improvement process for amendments or changes to the strategy.

Action Plan

Activity	Action	Statement
To raise awareness of consultation process	Promote through the Parish Website, Newsletter, local media	Promoting the strategy will be an ongoing priority.
To Identify minority/hard to reach groups	Identify these groups, identify channels of contact and consultation.	These groups are often left out. Identifying them will ensure they are included in consultation processes.
To work with Police and Partner Authorities.	Strengthen existing partnerships and develop new ones.	Working with partners is already a priority and has seen two outside forum groups formed with the support of the Council.
To identify consultation/focus groups.	Identify key groups within the parish who can be consulted on specialist matters.	This will enable smaller consultations to be initiated where specialist advice is required to inform decision making, but not requiring the need for a full consultation process.
To identify consultation needs, priorities and importance.	Establish need, priorities and importance of consultation.	This will ensure there is no overlap, overkill or misuse of the consultation process.
To identify benefits of consultation.	Identify if there is a real opportunity for people to influence decisions.	No consultation should be undertaken unless the outcome can be influenced. Unless this is possible a consultation will be meaningless and residents will become disinterested in the process.
Feedback on consultations.	Agree methods of feedback to residents and partners, ensure this is adhered to and includes details of the use of information gained.	This will keep all parties involved in the process and updated with the situation.

<p>To ensure outcomes of consultations are used to inform decisions and policies.</p>	<p>Use the outcome of consultations to inform decision making and shape policies.</p>	<p>All consultations will be undertaken to judge the best possible outcome for parishioners, locality and the environment.</p>
<p>To review outcome of key consultations.</p>	<p>Review consultation outcomes annually to highlight any failings in the processes.</p>	<p>This will enable identification of any changes and amendments required to the strategy</p>