



Fakenham Town Council

Fakenham Connect  
Oak Street  
Fakenham  
Norfolk  
NR21 9DY

Tel: 01328 853653  
e-mail: [info@fakenhamtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:info@fakenhamtowncouncil.gov.uk)  
website: [fakenhamtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://fakenhamtowncouncil.gov.uk)

## Community Engagement Policy

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### 1. Introduction

This Community Engagement Policy aims to set the standard for Fakenham Town Council's engagement with members of the community.

Councillors represent the views and opinions of their community as a voice of the local area deciding which Fakenham Town Council policies and projects are pursued. To do this they need to have regular contact with the community.

### 2. Overview

- 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 the council about their aspirations and or needs in their community and neighbourhood.
- It allows the council to consult with and inform people about what services it provides, how it prioritises, how policies are determined and how well its performing.

### 3. Aims & Objectives

- Ensure that embedded throughout the council there is clear understanding of the need to engage with communities about decisions that affect them
- Inform residents of the role of the Town Council and its Councillors.
- To keep residents informed of the work and role of the Town Council and its Councillors.
- To actively encourage resident involvement.
- To be inclusive in engaging with as many people as possible and adopt methods of communication which enables as many people as possible to be reached.
- To build relationships with resident, community groups and businesses to support their engagement with the Town Council.
- Listen to the views of residents and make sure they are used to inform Council decisions.
- To raise the profile of the Town Council.

### 4. Community Engagement Activities

The Town Council will facilitate community engagement in the following ways

#### Communication

- The Town Council website is the primary source of information on the Council for the community and it is kept up to date with content and routinely monitored. The Council aims to actively publish a wide range of information on the Council and its activities.

- The Council will make the best possible use of social media and publish relevant content. Social media account inboxes are monitored routinely for direct messages.
- The Council will use its noticeboards at the Connect Centre and Lower Market Place as well as community noticeboards around the town.
- The Council will display leaflets about its activities and community activities in its reception at the Connect Centre and on Noticeboards around the town.
- The Council will take measures, where practical, to reach those in the community who are not online.
- The Town Council will, operate a “gateway” service from its office to ensure local people and communities are referred to the correct organisation or authority if their issue cannot be resolved directly.

### **Meetings**

- A list of annual council and committee dates including the start times of the meetings and agenda distribution dates can be found on the council website.
- Meetings of the Council and its committees are open to the public and include the opportunity for members of the town to engage with councillors on agenda topics or request topics for future agendas. Agendas are published on the website and Town Council noticeboards.
- Questions about any council topic can also be asked via the Town Council Offices or Councillors and will be raised at the next relevant meeting as an elector’s question.
- The Annual Town Meeting provides an opportunity for electors to engage with the Council and to ask questions about the work of the Council and local issues.
- The Council will appoint members to represent the Council on community organisations as required.

### **Consultation**

- When the Town Council is seeking views on a specific project or idea it will consult with the community. Whilst most consultations will be open to the whole community it may on occasion consult with specific stakeholders only.
- When planning a consultation, the Council will identify the key stakeholders for that specific consultation exercise to ensure they are directly consulted.
- Consultations will be publicised as widely as possible and will have a defined end date for submissions. The Council will be clear about why it is consulting and how the consultation will be used in the Council’s decision-making process.
- The timing of consultations will be considered for example to coincide with events or to avoid clashes with holidays.
- The Council will consider the format of the consultation which may include: a. Open consultation on the Council website b. Consultation documents at key venues around the town c. Direct consultation (e.g. letters/leaflets/social media etc) d. Focus groups e. Consultation engagement events (e.g. public meetings, exhibitions, at events).

***Reviewed at Policy & Resources 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024***

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