

East Budleigh with Bickton Parish Council

Statement of Intent as to Community Engagement

Adopted January 2019

Aims and Objectives

East Budleigh with Bickton Parish Council (EBBPC) is an open and transparent Council, which values the opinions of the community which it serves. The Parish Council will listen to the needs and concerns of that community, and will strive to work on behalf of parishioners and do everything within its power and financial constraints to make the Parish a better place to live and work.

Defining the Community

EBBPC is keen to engage with all groups and individuals who work, or live in the Parish. It has historical links with the local Church, the School, all of the community buildings and facilities in the parish and the many varied voluntary organisations and community groups working for the good of the Parish, to ensure that as wide a cross section as possible of the community can have access to the Parish Council, its members, and staff.

Provision of Information to the Community

EBBPC has many avenues through which it communicates with its community. These include:

- Contact details of all the Councillors and the Clerk are published on notice boards and on the website.
- A website containing information about the work of the Parish Council including meeting minutes, policy documents, financial statements, annual report and how to contact anyone associated with the Council. It also includes links to other organisations including the principal authority.
- The Council recognises the importance of the monthly 'Parish Newsletter' and contributes as appropriate.
- Publishing of agendas and other information, on notice boards for all Council and Committee meetings.
- Publishing of minutes, on the Council web site, for all Council and committee meetings.
- The Parish Council's involvement in the Annual Parish Meeting.
- The annual External Audit offers the opportunity for questions to be asked about the latest Statement of Accounts via the publication scheme.
- A synopsis of the financial accounts is published on the website each month.
- The council has supported, and been part of the production of the approved Neighbourhood Plan. This is subject to cyclical review in conjunction with the community.

Opportunities for Community Involvement

EBBPC will make every opportunity available to the electorate to ensure excellent community involvement. This will include the following methods:

A public forum session at every Council meeting, where the electorate can raise issues in relation to the business on the agenda or request matters to be discussed at a subsequent meeting.

A period after the Council meeting has closed for the electorate to raise matters in general, which, if appropriate, may be included in a future meeting agenda.

Opportunities for Formal Representations to the Council

This “Statement of Intent” has elsewhere listed the opportunities that exist for the public to make formal representations to the Parish Council. Issues received in writing, providing they are received before the deadline for closure of the agenda, will be considered for inclusion as a stated item on the next agenda or within the Clerk’s correspondence report, subject to the agreement of the Chairman and Clerk.

It is a target that correspondence received from a member of the public is at least acknowledged, wherever possible, within five working days.

The Council has an adopted a Complaints Policy, which is available via the Council website or on request, as part of our commitment to community engagement.

Involvement in Partnerships

The Parish Council encourages and supports public meetings organised by the Emergency Services, the Health Authorities, East Devon District Council, Devon County Council, Devon Communities Together, Devon Community Resilience Forum, the Environment Agency, Otter Valley Association, Clinton Devon Estates and other organisations where they feel information should be made available to the residents of the Parish.

Role of Council Members and the Clerk

As an open and transparent Parish Council, both members and the Clerk seek to offer a high-quality professional service to all whom they serve. Members and the Clerk are keen to adhere to relevant Codes of Conduct in their business, and see the community as “customers” rather than an electorate. Both members and the Clerk endeavour to attend relevant training courses as appropriate to ensure their knowledge and skillsets are kept up-to-date.

Specific Areas for Community Involvement

Where there is a specific issue, or a new project, that the Parish Council wish to consider, it is of value to the Parish Council to seek the views of the community who will be most affected. The residents of the Parish can have confidence that their “voice” will be heard, and that the Council will work with the community to reach a common goal.