

Community Engagement Strategy 2017-18

Aims and Objectives

Felixstowe Town 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 our town. 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 this town.

What is Our Community?

We believe our community is everyone within the boundaries of our town including all ages, any organisations, groups and individuals within it. We also recognise that residents pay for the activities of the Town 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 town organisations, Residents Associations, the Police, other statutory services, neighbouring councils and other tiers of local government through both informal contacts and formal partnerships.

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 www.felixstowe.gov.uk
- Posted on the notice board at the Town Hall
- Available to view during the normal working hours of the Council
- Promoted via the Council's social media accounts

The Council also summarises its activities in its Newsletter which is delivered bi-monthly to all addresses in the town.

You can view the Council Freedom of Information Publication Scheme on the Council's website www.felixstowe.gov.uk

Opportunities for involvement and representations to the Council

Agendas for meetings of the Council and its Committees are open to the press and public, who are very welcome to attend. Agendas give 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, a public session is held at the beginning of meetings of the Council, Finance & General Purposes Committee, Assets & Services Committee, Civic & Community Committee and the Planning & Environment Committee, to provide an opportunity for the public to make representations. A time limit is applied to this session (usually 15 minutes) 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, other statutory bodies, local organisations and other tiers of local government an opportunity to make presentations prior to Committee and 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 town on a day falling between 1st March and 1st 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 Town Council has a positive policy to work in partnership with all appropriate organisations and individuals to achieve the highest level of service to the local community.

The Council has representation on a wide range of local organisations whose details are available from the Town Council offices and website. Representatives of the Town Council attend many meetings of bodies which make decisions affecting the local community. The reports of these meetings are available from the Town Council offices during normal working hours to all Councillors and to the public.

Role of Councillors

Councillors are the decision-makers of the Council. The contact details for all Councillors are available from the Council offices, the Town Council notice board, the Town Council website and the Town Council Newsletter. Councillors also hold the Clerk and all other officers to account. Councillors welcome contact with members of the public, endeavour to be available immediately prior to Council meetings and Committees 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.

Role of the Clerk

The contact details for the Clerk to the Council are published on agendas, the Town Hall notice board, the Town Council website and the Town Council Newsletter. 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 the Clerk and other officers of the Council 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.

Contact details for the Council are:

Felixstowe Town Council
Town Hall
Undercliff Road West
Felixstowe
IP11 2AG.

Telephone: 01394 282086
Fax: 01394 285920
Email: enquiries@felixstowe.gov.uk
Website: www.felixstowe.gov.uk

Policy Approved: Annual Council 10 May 2017 (pending)
Review Body: Civic & Community Committee recommendation to Council
Review Period: Annually
Next Review: C&C (April 2018) / Annual Council (May 2018)