

Monk Hesleden Parish Council

Statement of Intent Community Engagement

Approved 18/10/10
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Monk Hesleden Parish Council
Community Engagement

1. Summary

Monk Hesleden Parish Council is committed to improving its engagement with everyone in the Community, which includes residents, businesses, voluntary groups, young and elderly people, local groups and organisations.

The objective is to:

Increase the involvement of people in the life of their communities and in the decision-making processes that affect their quality of life and the services they receive.

2. Introduction

Monk Hesleden Parish Council provides local leadership and administers and provides a number of facilities and services.

These roles can only be pursued effectively if the Council engages with the community it serves by providing information and encouraging and seeking resident's views.

The Council already employs a number of methods to do this:

- Contact details for the Council, individual councillors, the Council office and key employees are available in the Council's quarterly newsletter, on the number notice boards located within the Parish and on the Council's website,
- The quarterly newsletter provides details about the opening times of the council offices
- Notices of meetings are posted in each of the Council's notice boards, website and Facebook page.
- The notices remind members of the community of their entitlement to attend meetings and address the council
- Copies of planning applications are available for inspection at the Council office
- The Council publishes an Annual Report a summary of which is distributed to every household and business within the Parish
- The Council manages its own website, this provides details of council services and activities and gives access to a range of documents
- The Council appoints representatives to local voluntary organisations and some Councillors are members of local voluntary organisations in their own right

The Council has formulated a strategy of engagement which builds on and extends the methods listed above and to make clear its commitment to working with and through the community. The Council will review the strategy from time to time to gauge whether residents have been encouraged to

- Participate in decision making to secure better services
- Help the Council to better serve the community
- Create a more active and informed community

3. Aims & Objectives

The council's aims and objectives for seeking community engagement and the outcomes it hopes to achieve are:

- To enable involved, empowered and active citizenship through:
 - a) consultation with residents on local issues
 - b) reaching out to hard to reach groups
 - c) seeking the views of young people
 - d) to communicate information to our community clearly, factually and appropriately through
- The management of a website detailing all council services and activities
- The publication of a quarterly newsletter distributed to every household
- To improve communications with our partners
- Use of social media ie Facebook
- Actively being involved in various networking organisations i.e. East Durham Trust, Aim High Network, East Durham Area Action Partnership

To raise the image and reputation of the Council through:

- Inviting residents to be actively involved in our meetings via the public participation
- Publicising the annual parish meeting
- Encouraging use of the Council website and Facebook page
- Encouraging the press to attend Council meetings and report on them and when appropriate issuing press releases covering activities of the Council

- Organising events and activities within the community
- Actively promote and support the Blackhall Community Youth Group

To enable every Councillor to maximise their role as elected representatives and community leaders through

- The preparation of a comprehensive new members pack
- Uploading of agendas and minutes on the Council website
- Encouraging Councillors to attend meetings of community organisations
- Encouraging Councillors to actively represent the interest of the Council at community events

4. Engagement

Listed below are the individuals and organisations which the Council wishes to actively engage with:

- Residents
- Users of council services
- Community Associations
- Head Teachers and Governors of local primary schools
- Young people who live in the villages
- Retail and other businesses in the community
- Interest groups- clubs and societies i.e. WI Blackhall Players
- Voluntary Organisations
- Church Groups
- Farming Community
- Groups of people defined by a common factor such as age, disability, faith and other groups
- Councillors and representatives of the Council staff

5. Action Plan

Chairman and Vice-Chairman	Encourage Chairman and Vice-Chairman to fulfil their civic role and encourage community organisations to invite to events	Clerk, Chairman & Vice-Chairman	Ongoing
Minutes	Ensure copies of minutes are available in both hard copy and electronically for residents and community groups including copies with principal authority or their representatives	Clerk/ Admin Officer	Ongoing
Annual Report	Ensure copies of the Annual Report are available in both hard copy and electronically for residents and the local library including copies lodged with principal authority or their representatives	Clerk/Admin Officer	Annually
Office opening hours	Publicise office opening hours in newsletter, website, Facebook, page n and notice boards	Clerk/Admin Officer	Ongoing
Annual Assembly of Electors	Publicise more widely the meeting to ensure all residents are able to raise matters of interest and concern	Clerk & members	Annually
Public Participation	Encourage residents to raise any matters of interest at council meetings	Clerk & members	Monthly
Notice boards	Regular update with council and community activities	Clerk & members	Ongoing
Website	Maintain web-site with information on council services and activities	Clerk & Admin Officer	Ongoing
Newsletter	Produce and distribute quarterly newsletter	Clerk, Admin Officer & members	Quarterly
Facebook page	Updated as required	Clerk, Admin	Ongoing

Youth Activity	Maintain contact with all local schools Continue to facilitate the monthly Blackhall Community Youth Project meeting Support the Blackhall Community Youth Group	Clerk & members	Ongoing
Local Democracy	a) Encourage residents to both vote at and stand for the Parish Council in local elections b) Publicise and promote registration as an elector	Clerk & members	Ongoing
Press	Liaise regularly with the press sending details of council meetings	Clerk	Ongoing
Principal Authority	Maintain contact with principal authority councillors to ensure sharing of information	Clerk & members	Ongoing