

# RENHOLD PARISH COUNCIL

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## RENHOLD PARISH COUNCIL **Community Engagement Strategy**

Renhold Parish Council is committed to engaging with residents by encouraging them to become actively involved in decisions that affect them and the community, to improve the quality of life of residents *by creating active and informed parishioners.*

### **Aims**

The aims of the Community Strategy is to:

- Improve the way in which the Council communicates with members of the community
- To listen to the views of residents on important issues
- To improve the long term social, economic and environmental well being of residents
- To ensure development of the parish is in accordance with the needs and priorities of the community.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the Strategy are:

- To use a variety of methods to make information available
- To actively facilitate and encourage community engagement
- To proactively engage with all sections of the community
- To ensure that decisions meet the needs of the community by involving members of the *parish in the decision making process*
- To work in partnership with other organisations and authorities to improve the quality and delivery of services
- To enhance the well being of members of the community

### **Communication with the Community**

Information will be made in a variety of ways to ensure that all sections of the community are reached, this include the following:

Parish Council Notice Boards – information, including agendas for meetings, contact details for the Clerk and Councillors are displayed on throughout the village on the six notice boards which are located in Asgard Drive, Church End, Green End, Hookhams Lane, Ravensden Road and Top End.

Renhold Village Magazine – notice of meetings, reports on meetings and information on Council activities are included within this publication which is produced eleven times a year and is distributed to every house within the parish.

Parish Council website – the website provides information regarding date, agenda and minutes of meetings and committees, Council policy documents and reports the Council consider. There is also a section that allows information to be found on the local authority and other organisations such as the local police to further promote the well being of the community.

When there is a matter that affects the community, the Council will ensure that the information is delivered directly to every household in the parish as done during public consultation periods for the Traffic Regulation Order and Heavy Goods Vehicle proposed ban, both items affected the parish directly.

### **Opportunities for Parish Involvement**

Parish Council meetings are open to the public and a time is set aside for members of the parish to make comments or ask questions. Residents are and will be continued to be encouraged to submit items which they wish to be brought to the attention of Councillors at meetings, or give their opinion on a particular agenda item.

A full list of members and the Clerks contact details are listed in every edition of the Parish Magazine, including the relevant Committee and/or Working Group a Councillor is a member. This to further

encourage residents to contact the Councillors direct who will deal or advise with any prevailing problem.

The Parish Council website also has the same detailed information of relating to Councillors and the Clerk, as well as a direct 'contact us' feature.

### **Consultation**

The Parish Council will always carry out consultations on important issues affecting the parish, ensuring that those most affected by an issue will be given the opportunity to voice an opinion; the Council will also encourage the community to respond directly to external consultations. The Council will ensure that all members of the community are included within the consultation including hard to reach groups such as the elderly, disabled, housebound etc. Results regarding such consultations will be made available to all members of the parish, and the Annual Parish Meeting will continue to be used to obtain the view of residents on matters affecting the community.

As a statutory consultee for planning applications, the Council ensure any neighbour comments are received and all Councillors are aware of the comments at Council meetings. In addition, Councillors regularly undertake site visits to view the site in person so all aspects can be considered and liaise with the local residents.

### **Partnership Working**

The Parish Council is committed to working with local voluntary and community groups to improve the quality of life for residents in the parish, the Council will work with the local authorities (Bedford Borough and the Police) to ensure improvement in the quality and delivery of services to those living in the parish. The Parish Council will work with neighbouring Parish Councils to find solution to common problems and will continue to support and engage with local organisations to assist them in meeting their own aims and objectives.

The Community Engagement Strategy will be reviewed regularly to assess its effectiveness.

**Adopted by Renhold Parish Council on 22nd June 2011.**