

# RENHOLD PARISH COUNCIL

**Clerk to the 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 seven notice boards which are located in Aspire Estate, 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.

Village circulation list – the Parish Council felt it would be useful to have a communication list for residents which would allow for information to be sent in a quick and easy way. An electronic list of email addresses is held by the Clerk and regular updates are circulated on a wide range of subjects.

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 the Local Plan 2032 call for sites public consultation, 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.

Ahead of every Parish Council meeting, the meeting agenda is sent to the village circulation list by the Clerk, in addition, with any other items of interest for residents.

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 give 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 in June 2010, last reviewed November 2015, next review November 2016.**

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## RENHOLD PARISH COUNCIL **Community Action Plan**

Renhold Parish Council has developed the following action from reviewing the community strategy and involving the parishioners input. The key focus areas for the Parish Council over 2015/16 are:

### **Improving highway safety in the village:**

**Average speed cameras** – the Parish Council agreed to contribute to an ASC scheme in the village as a sign of their commit to reduce speeding and deter motorists from accessing the village. The Borough Council have agreed to a scheme in the village to be installed within 2013/14, however, due to some technical set backs they were not implemented. The Parish Council will work with the Borough Council to ensure these cameras are installed to minimise speeding in the village.

**Safety issues along Church End** – the Parish Council will continue to work with the Borough Council Officers, the local community, and the school governors to find solutions which will increase highways safety in this part of the village for road users, pedestrians and residents.

**HGV movements in the village** – the Parish Council will continue to monitor the use of the village roads by HGV's and work closely with the relevant Borough Council Officers.

### **Strategic implications on the parish:**

**Local Plan 2032** – the Parish Council will ensure that clear communications are made with residents through a number of different ways so they are kept up to date on this important development framework strategy document. The Parish Council will respond to any associated public consultations that take place over the year.

**Local authority move to a two tier education system** – the Parish Council will engage in the public consultation expected later 2015, and continue working with the relevant stakeholders.

### **Increasing involvement of the estates off Norse Road in the community:**

The Parish Council are aware and will continue to engage with residents within these communities, welcoming and valuing their input.

### **Remaining financial prudent:**

The Parish Council strive to be prudent, and this will continue with close monitoring of their finances, as well as review, where appropriate, of how they can work more cost effectively, whilst still delivering a high standard of service to the residents.

### **Bringing benefit to the community:**

**Village sign** – to take through the village sign from the design stage to construction and installation on the village green.

**Development of a village website resource** – to investigate how such a resource could be of benefit to the whole community.

**Quality Council Award Scheme** – to retain the Award the Council previously achieved, as the Parish Council prides itself on its democracy and transparency, as well working on behalf of the residents to improve the village.