



BRIZE NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Community Engagement Policy

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Adopted by Full Council	May 2019
Last Review	June 2021
This Review	June 2023
Next Review	2025

POLICY STATEMENT

As a dynamic and professional Parish Council, both Councillors, the Clerk and other employees seek to deliver a high-quality service to all whom they serve and aim to represent the interests of the community as a whole. It is the duty of the members of the Council to strive to reach their full potential in service delivery.

Brize Norton Parish Council is an open and transparent Council, which values the opinions of the community which it serves. To the best of its ability, it listens to the needs and concerns of the community, to make Brize Norton Parish a better place to live and work, within its power and financial constraints. It is the responsibility for councillors to be well-informed, which gives them greater confidence when fulfilling duties and responsibilities

The Council relies on communication with residents, as the Council cannot assume to represent the interests of the electorate without consultation. This leads to stronger evidence for action, clear strategic plans and enables the Council to reach difficult decisions in an open and reasoned way.

THE COMMUNITY

The Councillors and Clerk seek to strengthen people's sense of belonging and purpose to enhance the life experiences and well-being of the residents. Brize Norton Parish Council is keen to reach all groups and individuals who work or live in the Parish that they represent. It has historical links with St. Britius's Church and Brize Norton Primary School and many voluntary groups working within the Parish, to ensure that as wide a cross-section as possible can have access to the Council, its Members and the Clerk.

Opportunities should stimulate discussion and inform decision makers. It is important that these occasions give the community a chance in which to express their opinion and identify elements in the Parish, which need improving or are worth preserving.

The Council foster good relationships with other authorities Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) and neighbouring parish and town councils to present and resolve issues concerning the parish.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION

Brize Norton Parish Council has many avenues through which it communicates with its community. These include:

- Contact details of Councillors and Clerk are published on notice boards, website and in the Parish Magazine.
- A web-site containing the information an individual might wish to know about the work of the Parish Council including meeting minutes, policy documents, financial statements, annual report and contact details for the Council, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- Publishing of agendas on the three notice boards in the Parish, for all Council meetings.
- Publishing of minutes, on the Council website, for all Council meetings.
- The Parish Council invites residents to attend the Annual Parish Meeting.
- The Annual External Audit offers the opportunity for questions to be asked about the latest Statement of Accounts. The financial accounts are published within the Annual Report along with supporting information.
- A social media presence, to promote information relevant to Council business.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Brize Norton Parish Council will make every opportunity available to the electorate to ensure excellent community involvement. These will include the following methods:

- A public participation session at every Council meeting in line with the Council's Standing Orders (3d, e, h), where members of the public can raise issues in relation to the business on the agenda or request matters to be discussed at subsequent meetings.
- Social events, alongside other groups within the community such as St. Britius's Church and the Primary School. These include:
 - the annual 'Village Bash',
 - the village bonfire and
 - memorial ceremonies in the Church and repatriations from RAF Brize Norton.
- The Neighbourhood Plan, which has been driven by both Councillors and Members of the Public, with several opportunities for community engagement. The evidence from the community survey is extensive and is a valuable resource of village history.
- The quarterly Parish Magazine has several articles relating to Council updates as well as contributions from other groups in the village. This is delivered free to every household in the parish.
- Welcome Brochures are given to new residents in the parish. This contains information on the community and the Parish Council.
- Social Media (Facebook and Twitter page - linked to the Council website), on which history, information and questions are communicated. The Council further seek out opinion through the use of polls through social media.

FORMAL REPRESENTATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

Issues received in writing, providing they are received before the deadline for closure of the agenda, are included as a stated item on the next agenda. This is detailed in the Council's Standing Orders (9b).

It is a target that correspondence received from a member of the public is at least acknowledged, wherever possible, within five working days, (remembering the clerk holds a part time role).

SPECIFIC AREAS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Where there is a specific issue, or a new project, that the Parish Council wish to consider, the Parish Council will seek the views of the community. The residents of the Parish can have confidence that their "voice" will be heard, and that the Council will work in partnership with other bodies in the community to reach a common goal.