

# WHPC Community Engagement Policy

ADOPTED WHPC Meeting 1<sup>st</sup> September 2026 Agenda Item 26/232

## Version Control

New Policy                      ADOPTED WPC Meeting 1st September 2026  
Next Review date      Annual Meeting 2028

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## 1. Introduction

West Hill Parish Council (WHPC) is committed to community engagement at all levels and supports and encourages all community members to engage with the Council. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the WHPC Communications Policy.

## 2. Purpose

The overall aim is to make Council communications a two-way process. The intention is to provide timely information to allow the community to understand what we do, whilst enabling the Council to make informed decisions using accurate information received from residents and partners.

The objective of our community engagement policy is to:

- Improve, plan and shape the future of the parish according to local needs and priorities through active engagement with the community to understand needs and priorities.
- Use the process of engagement to inform decision making.
- Raise the profile of the village and the work of the Parish Council.
- Use a variety of methods to provide information to the community.
- Engage with local and strategic partners on a range of matters of interest or concern to the community.

Who are the community, local partners and other stakeholders?

- Village Residents
- Societies and organisations with interests in the parish
- Local businesses
- Sports and activity Clubs
- District and County Councillors, MPs
- Neighbouring Councils and Authorities
- Other council officers and public sector organisations such as those concerned with health, education,
- Police

## 3. Strategy for Engagement

The Council will achieve its engagement objectives by using the following methods of communication and engagement:

**The Parish Clerk** – The Clerk is a pivotal point of contact for residents in fielding and answering queries which arise. The Clerk's contact details are widely publicised and contact may be made by email and via Facebook.

**Parish Council Meetings** – Parish Council meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month. Meetings are open to the public and agendas are published in advance of meetings on the Council's website and noticeboards. In all respects the Parish Council meetings comply with the Council's Standing Orders ensuring good practice is maintained. At each meeting, there is an opportunity for

residents to speak on matters on the agenda. (*Ref WHPC Protocol for Public Participation in Parish Council meetings*).

**Parish Council Website** ([www.westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk)) – The Parish Council has a website which gives information about the Parish Council and other village matters. There is an electronic Contact Us form on the website which links to the Clerk's email account for a response to be given.

**Parish Council Contact Details** – The Parish Council display contact details on the website, noticeboards and Facebook.

**Calendar of Meetings** – The Parish Council display the annual timetable for meetings on the website and noticeboard.

**Annual Parish Meeting** – The Annual Parish Meeting is organised by the Parish Council and this brings the community together and allow residents to question and review how the elected members help shape the community. The Parish Council determines the “interest theme” for each annual meeting to encourage maximum turn out by the community. The main objective of the annual meeting is to provide and encourage two-way communication between the community and councillors. The meeting is advertised in advance on the website, noticeboards, and Facebook.

**Resident's Monthly Drop-In Sessions:** For a trial period of six months, from September 2026 to Feb 2027, the Parish Council will hold a monthly drop-in session to provide an opportunity for village residents to liaise with members of the Council. (*Ref WHPC Protocol for Parish Council Monthly “Drop In” Sessions*).

**Community Information Sessions** – On an occasional basis the Parish Council will arrange opportunities for residents to attend drop-in/ sessions. Previous events have been led:

- by the Parish Council: such as Emerging East Devon Local Plan
- run by other parties: such as South West Ambulance Service Trust (*Defibrillator familiarisation*)

**Public Consultation** – A public consultation will be conducted if the Council concludes a particular event or programme that has an impact on the parish warrants a consultation programme. The intention of this exercise would be to better understand the needs of the parish. Previous consultations held: Developing a new Neighbourhood Plan,

**Parish Council Newsletter** – Several times a year, the Parish Council distributes a newsletter to all homes in the parish, either by hand or electronically. This contains key information about the work of the Parish Council, project updates, matters affected the village.

**Links to Outside Bodies** – Where possible, Councillors will link to outside bodies and will work with them, reporting back to the full council meeting, as appropriate. Representatives will be determined at the first annual meeting of the Parish Council each year.

**Working with Volunteers** – Where possible, the Parish Council will encourage and facilitate volunteering within the village. Volunteers doing work arranged by the Parish Council will work within the Council's Volunteer Policy and risk assessment.

**Social Media** – The Parish Council does not currently use social media.

#### 4. Monitoring and Review

This Community Engagement Policy provides the framework for how the Parish Council will communicate and engage with parishioners and other organisations. It will be reviewed and updated as necessary, but at least every 3 years.

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