

Sandford St Martin Parish Council Community Engagement Policy

Adopted by Sandford St Martin Parish Council on 11 March 2021
Last approved 16 March 2023

Introduction

Sandford St Martin Parish Council recognises the need to consider the impact of its actions on others and the surrounding environment. The Parish Council cannot force any individual or group to become involved it can, and shall, make it easier and more attractive for them to do so.

The Council recognises that other bodies are crucial to the quality of life in the parish, and it will maintain strong working relationships with West Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, the Police and neighbouring Parish and Town Councils.

The Council defines communication as the process of informing the community about decisions that have been made, or the passing on of information.

The Council defines engagement as involving the community to help form opinion and review decisions.

The Council is always open to receiving both positive and negative feedback and has a commitment to encouraging the community to engage with the Council.

Community

The Council considers that the community of Sandford St Martin Parish comprises of:

- All residents of the Parish
- All users of the community services
- All those who work, or own businesses within the Parish
- All young people who live or go to activities in the Parish
- All voluntary organisations, clubs and societies in the Parish
- All groups and organisations representing sections of the community

Communication

1. The Parish Council website is the primary source of information on the Council for the community and will be kept up-to-date with content routinely monitored. The Council aims to actively publish a wide range of information on the council and its activities.
2. The Council will use its Notice Boards to advertise meetings, display minutes and display notices of relevance to the community.
3. The Chairman of the Council will report the Council activities of the previous year, and advise of its future plans at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Engagement

1. The Council shall set aside time at every ordinary Council meeting for members of the public to address the Council.
2. The Council will accept letters and emails from the public, and these will be covered in the Business section of the Council meeting if appropriate.
3. The public may approach a member of the Council, directly, or via the Clerk, to discuss any issues.
4. The Council will develop its Annual Parish Meeting as an opportunity to inform the community of its plans for the year and longer term, to gain views and ideas from the community, and to give the community a forum to discuss its concerns.

Consultation

1. When the Parish Council is seeking views on a specific project or idea it will consult with the community.
2. Whilst the majority of consultations will be open to the whole community it may on occasion consult with specific stakeholders only.
3. When planning a consultation the Council will identify the key stakeholders for that specific consultation exercise to ensure they are directly consulted.
4. Consultations will be publicised as widely as possible and will have a defined end date for submissions.
5. The Council will be clear about why it is consulting and how the consultation will be used in the Council's decision making process.
6. The timings of consultations will be considered to enable maximum opportunity for comment.
7. The Council shall consider the format of the consultation which may include:
 - a. Consultation information on the Council website;
 - b. Direct consultation, eg letters/leaflets etc;
 - c. Focus groups;
 - d. Consultation events, eg public meetings.