



Community Engagement Strategy

Introduction

A community engagement strategy guides us and our partners (including Lancashire County Council, Police and health service) on how we engage with our communities, interested people and organisations in the many services we all provide.

Aims and Objectives

It's important for everyone to have the opportunity to get involved and have their say in local issues that affect or interest them. Nelson Town Council is committed to engaging residents by encouraging them to become actively involved in decisions that affect them and the community, to delivering better services and to improving the quality of life of residents by creating a more active and informed community. Nelson Town Council will do this by ensuring access to relevant information to allow them to contribute by an exchange of information to the decision-making process.

The aim of the Community Engagement Strategy is to:

- To work with all members of the community by keeping them informed of events within their locality.
- 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 use these views to deliver better services
- To improve the long-term social, economic and environmental well being of residents
- To plan future development of the parish in accordance with community priorities and needs

Community Engagement

Nelson Town Council and its partners will inform, consult and involve the community in many ways to influence local services. It will do this through various methods included but not limited to:

- Agenda and minutes to be placed on the website
- The Annual Report and Accounts will be available at the Annual Town Meeting and on the web site
- Survey, both electronic and paper based
- Website Forums
- Public Meetings
- Door knocking
- Encouraging more public participation at meetings
- Meeting with local representatives and groups
- Having representatives on outside bodies
- Noticeboards

- Newsletters
- Newspapers
- Social networking including Facebook and Twitter
- Presentations
- Councillor surgeries
- Planning for real exercises

The Town Clerk will

- Develop and assess Questionnaires
- Reporting back to Council
- Identifying the hard to reach groups
- Publishing results
- Receive and store information
- Arrange visits
- Prepare presentations
- Design newsletters
- Place notices in noticeboards
- Update the website, Facebook and twitter pages

Opportunities for Community Involvement

Parish Council Meetings

The Town Council has an element for Public Participation. The monthly (except August) council meetings are open to the public and time is set aside, prior to the commencement of the meeting, for members of the parish to make comments or to ask questions.

An Annual Town meeting is held in April each year giving residents the opportunity to have a say on local issues, find out what the town council has been doing and residents are given the opportunity to share their opinions on the services delivered by the council.

Residents will continue to be encouraged to submit items which they wish to be brought to the attention of Councillors at the monthly meetings, or to give their opinion on a particular agenda item, to the Clerk.

Contact Your Councillors

Make an appointment, make a phone call, write a letter, send a fax, e-mail a message – let your Councillor know what you think.

- Contact your Councillor to:
- let them know what you think
- get advice or help
- pass on a suggestion or good idea

Contact your local council for details about your local government representatives.

Write or Sign a Petition

A petition is a document that states a concern and asks that something be done to improve the situation. Members of the community sign the petition to show their support. The more signatures the better. If someone asks you to sign a petition and you support the idea – sign it.

Petitions are tabled in Full Council. They tell our Councillors how members of the public are feeling about an issue.

If you want to write a petition, decide whether the issue is a local, Borough or County one and contact your Councillor for that Council. They will provide you with information on how to write your petition. You will need to collect signatures and ask your Councillor to present the petition to Full Council.

Write a Letter to the Editor

If you want other people to hear about your concern or good idea, a newspaper may be prepared to publish a letter from you in the "letters to the editor" section. Look in the newspaper for details on how to do this.

Join a Political Party

If you want to be involved in selecting candidates (or becoming one) and developing policies, contact the political party of your choice and find out about membership fees and how to apply.

Join or Start a Lobby Group

Lobby groups try to bring about change. A lobby group may be a big organisation or a small community group who share the same ideas about an issue. Larger lobby groups are listed in the telephone directory and would welcome your enquiry about membership.

Inform the Media

Newspapers, television, and radio are the main way that information is spread. If you feel that you have been disadvantaged or have something worthwhile to tell, consider contacting the media. They may choose to use a journalist to report your story to the community.

Attend or Organise a Rally

It is legal to attend or organise a rally or meeting to express your view on an issue. Protest can be a powerful way of sending a message to your representatives, and often attracts media attention. Although it is legal to express your opinion by attending or speaking at a rally, make sure that you obey laws about behaviour in public places. If you plan to organise a rally, contact the police first.

Partnership Working

Nelson Town Council is committed to working with local voluntary and community groups to improve the quality of life for residents in the parish. The Town Council will work with Local Authorities (Borough, County and the Police) to ensure an improvement in the quality and delivery of services.

The Town Council Council will work with neighbouring parish councils to find a solution to common problems. The Town Council will continue to support and engage with local organisations to assist them in meeting their own aims and objectives. The Town Council will continue to support local projects and events.

The Community Engagement Strategy will be reviewed annually to assess its effectiveness and amended as necessary.