

# NEWTON POPPLEFORD AND HARPFORD PARISH COUNCIL

## Statement of Intent as to Community Engagement

Approved by Council August 2017 – minute entry 359 (PPSC)

### Aims and Objectives

Newton Poppleford and Harpford Parish Council is an open and transparent smaller authority Council, which values the opinions of the community which it serves. Now, and in the future, the Parish Council will listen to the needs and concerns of that community, and will do everything within its power and financial constraints, to make Newton Poppleford and Harpford Parish a better place to live and work.

### Defining the Community

Newton Poppleford and Harpford Parish Council is keen to reach all groups and individuals who work, or live in the Parish. It has historical links with the local Church, Newton Poppleford and Harpford Village School, all of the community buildings in the parish and the many varied voluntary organisations and community groups working for the good of the Parish, to ensure that as wide a cross section as possible of the community can have access to the Parish Council, its members, and staff.

### Provision of Information to the Community

Newton Poppleford and Harpford Parish Council has many avenues through which it communicates with its community. These include:

- Contact details of all the Councillors and the Clerk are published on notice boards, website, in the 'Parish Newsletter' and in the Annual Report.
- A web-site containing information about the work of the Parish Council including meeting minutes, policy documents, financial statements, annual report and how to contact anyone associated with the Council. It also includes links to other organisations including the principal authority.
- The council submits articles to the monthly 'Parish Newsletter'.
- Publishing of agendas and other information, on official and community notice boards throughout the Parish, for all Council and committee meetings.
- Publishing of minutes, on the Council web site, for all Council and committee meetings.
- The Parish Council's involvement in the Annual Parish Meeting.
- The annual External Audit offers the opportunity for questions to be asked about the latest Statement of Accounts via the publication scheme.
- A synopsis of the financial accounts is published on the website each month.
- The council has supported, and been part of the production of the Neighbourhood Plan, currently in progress.

## **Opportunities for Community Involvement**

Newton Poppleford and Harpford Parish Council will make every opportunity available to the electorate to ensure excellent community involvement. These will include the following method:

A public forum session at every Council meeting, where the electorate can raise issues in relation to the business on the agenda or request matters to be discussed at a subsequent meeting.

## **Opportunities for Formal Representations to the Council**

This "Statement of Intent" has elsewhere listed the many opportunities that exist for the public to make formal representations to the Parish Council. Issues received in writing, providing they are received before the deadline for closure of the agenda. All such requests will be considered for inclusion as a stated item on the next agenda, subject to the agreement of the Chairman and Clerk.

It is a target that correspondence received from a member of the public is at least acknowledged, wherever possible, within five working days.

The Council has an adopted Complaints Policy, a copy of which is available on demand, and is also posted on the Council website, as part of our commitment to community engagement.

## **Involvement in Partnerships**

The Parish Council encourages and supports public meetings organised by the police, the health authorities, East Devon District Council, Devon County Council and other organisations where they feel information should be made available to the residents of the Parish. Members also attend meetings of adjoining parish councils wherever and whenever possible to maintain effective and mutually beneficial cross-parish relationships.

## **Role of Council Members and the Clerk**

As an open and transparent Parish Council, both members and the Clerk seek to offer a high quality professional service to all whom they serve. Members and the Clerk are keen to maintain relevant Codes of Conduct in their business, and see the community as "customers" rather than an electorate. Both members and the Clerk endeavour to attend relevant training courses as appropriate and available to ensure their knowledge and skillsets are kept up-to-date.

## **Specific Areas for Community Involvement**

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

*This Statement of Intent was formally adopted by Newton Poppleford and Harpford Parish Council and approved for publication on 03.08.17, minute entry 359 (PPSC)*