## Tanworth in Arden Parish Council

# Community Engagement Policy

Date policy adopted: 18/07/24 Date for review: July 2026

**What is Community Engagement?**

'Engagement' is used as a generic, inclusive term to describe the broad range of interactions between people. It can include a variety of approaches, such as communication or information delivery, consultation, involvement and collaboration in decision-making, and empowered action in informal groups or formal partnerships.

The word 'Community' is also a very broad term used to define groups of people and the individuals within them; whether they are stakeholders, interest groups, residents etc. A community may be a geographic location (community of place), a community of similar interest (community of practice), or a community of affiliation or identity (such as industry or sporting club).

'Community Engagement' is therefore a planned process with the specific purpose of working with identified groups of people or individuals to address issues affecting their wellbeing.

The linking of the term 'community' to 'engagement' serves to broaden the scope, shifting the focus from the individual to the collective to ensure consideration is made of the diversity that exists within any community.

**Introduction**

The purpose of this Policy is to guide TIA Parish Council's communication activity and public engagement. The Council aims to ensure that there are effective channels of communication both from the Council to the public and from the public to the Council.

**Aims**

TIA Parish Council aims to:

- work more closely with residents, business and community groups;
- engage with as many people as possible in decision making, monitoring services and planning for the future;

- ensure that through the use of a wide range of approaches to public involvement and community engagement that residents are encouraged to share their views, ideas and concerns with the Council;
- use the views of the residents as an integral part of the decision-making process; and
- ensure that residents have opportunities to be heard at every stage.

**Objectives**

The Council is committed to creating and maintaining effective working relationships with all sectors of the community, based on trust, openness and constructive challenge.

The Councils objectives include:
- improving communication through the establishment of new channels of engagement;
- improving residents understanding of the role of the Council and Councillors;
- improving engagement with local communities, with more people feeling that they are involved in their area; and
- improving satisfaction with local public services and the area.

TIA Parish Council intends to meet its objectives through:

a) Honesty and Openness
   i) making clear the purpose of any engagement activity;
   ii) using the right methods to engage the local community;
   iii) using engagement methods that are proportionate to the significance of the issue;
   iv) being clear about what can be influenced; and
   v) using honest, accurate and unbiased information.

b) Listening
   i) listening and responding to individuals and communities, enabling and empowering residents to play an effective role in setting priorities, designing services and influencing decisions to shape their local area.

c) Inclusion
   i) undertaking fair and impartial engagement to a high standard to ensure that all residents are offered equal opportunities to participate in issues that may affect them and make a difference.

d) Working Together
   i) working together with a consistent approach to community engagement;
   ii) sharing knowledge and information openly with residents and partner organisations, whilst respecting confidentiality; and
   iii) using what has been learnt from contact with local people to better understand and engage with the community, and to improve the services it delivers.

e) Keeping in Touch
   i) Providing feedback and demonstrating that changes are made as a result of engagement.
   ii) Using the following tools to inform, consult and involve:

- posters, flyers and publications (newsletters);
- public, neighbourhood and specific meetings including Parish Council meetings, Annual Parish meeting etc;
- parishioners are encouraged to attend Full Council and Committee Meetings and time is set aside at all meetings for public participation at all these meetings;
- presentations and briefings;
- website updates, email, Facebook page etc;
- questionnaires and surveys;
- consultation events/workshops/exhibitions/general events;
- Working parties;
- community led plans i.e. Parish Plan, Neighbourhood Development Plan; and
- comments and complaints.

**Provision of Information to the Community**

TIA Parish Council will make available to the community information relating to who we are, what we do, what we spend and how we spend it, how we make decisions, our policies and procedures and the services we offer.

Information will be provided to the community in the following ways:

- contact details for the Clerk and all Councillors are displayed on the Council's website
- the Council's website address is widely published and the site contains all the information an individual might wish to know about the work of the Parish Council and its individuals, including meeting minutes, policy documents, financial statements, annual report and how to contact anyone associated with the Council.
- information such as agendas are published on the 2 notice boards located in the Parish, on the website and a post is put on social media with a link to the full agenda on the website.

**Opportunities for formal representations to the Council**

- Representations to the Parish Council will normally be considered at the next meeting of the relevant standing committee.
- If, however, they require the provision of information only, then the clerk will provide it in accordance with the council's publication scheme.
- The Parish Council has a Code of Practice for handling complaints, which is available from the clerk, published on the website and reviewed annually.
- The publication of agendas on the Parish Council's notice boards and website gives parishioners the opportunity to make representation to the council before agenda items are discussed.
- All formal representations received are responded to in writing.