

Brewood and Coven Parish Council with Bishop's Wood and Coven Heath

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Introduction

The purpose of this Policy is to actively direct the Parish Council's communications and public engagement. As a Parish Council we want to ensure that communications with us and the local community are two-way. We want to tell people about ourselves and what we do and also to listen to what people tell us about themselves and the service improvements they would like.

The Policy has been written to help us to involve as many people as possible in a variety of ways and will cover all aspects of the Parish Council's communications with everyone who comes into contact with us either directly or indirectly.

Aim

The Parish Council would like to engage with as many people as possible to involve them in decision making, enhance local democracy and ensure that it communicates clearly with all stakeholders in a timely and effective manner to inform and consult them about matters that might affect them; and to publicize the services offered by the Council. The key stakeholders with which the Council must communicate include: residents, local businesses, local farmers, community groups, village organisations, youth groups, the Press, schools, Parish Councillors, MPs, South Staffordshire Council, and Staffordshire County Council. We aim to be a transparent council, compliant with the Transparency Code 2014 therefore all relevant parish council business is available on the website.

Methods of Communication

Methods used by Parish Council to communicate and engage stakeholders about Council activities will take the form of:

- Directly with the Clerk, Mrs Maggie Birtles either face to face or on the telephone, tel: 01902 850809, (answering service also available out of hours).
- Bimonthly Parish Council meetings, which include a public participation session of up to 15 minutes prior to every meeting of the full Council and members of the Press are always welcome.
- Website: www.brewoodandcovenparish.org.uk where all information regarding the Parish Council, its members, staff and activities is available and regularly updated.
- Email: brewoodparish@btconnect.com. Parish Councillors are also contactable via email, telephone or face to face, details available on the website and noticeboards.
- Quarterly newsletters are delivered to every household in the Parish free of charge or available for collection from the Parish Council Office, 35 Stafford Street, Brewood ST19 9DX. Large print copies are available upon request. Questionnaires are regularly included.
- The Annual Report is included in the first issue of the newsletter following the Annual Parish meeting.
- Media releases will be issued as and when appropriate.
- Postings on 5 notice boards throughout the villages and on the Parish Council's website publicizing Brewood and Coven Parish Council's agendas, diary of meetings, councillors' contact details, notices from Staffordshire County Council e.g. elections, road closures etc; all such notices will be regularly posted to the Parish Council's Facebook page.
- Agendas for all meetings will be sent to Staffordshire Police, Brewood Library, our County Councillor and the Express & Star newsgroup.
- The Parish Council will try to attract by way of advertisement as many participants as possible to its Annual Parish Meeting.

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- Initiatives will be launched that involve residents, e.g. The Council will seek volunteers to help with the Best Kept Village Competition, litter picking, Brewood Open Garden Weekend, Christmas lights events, Brewood Music Festival and other locally held events.
- Councillors will continue to represent the Council on all three Village Hall Committees and various local groups such as Friends of the Bront, Friends of Barnfield Sandbeds, as well as communication with St John's First School, Bishop's Wood, St Mary & St Chad First School, Brewood, St Mary's RC School, Brewood, St Paul's First School, Coven, Brewood Middle School, St Dominic's School, Brewood, Wolgarston High School, Penkridge. The Chairman and Parish Councillors take part in the annual wreath-laying ceremony on Remembrance Day at three churches in the Parish and at South Staffordshire Council. The Chairman attends the Armed Forces Day at South Staffordshire Council.
- Parish Councillors regularly attend South Staffordshire Council's initiatives such as the Good Life, Let's Work Together and Parish Summits and Staffordshire Police Locality Forums.
- For any village initiatives consultation will be undertaken with residents in the vicinity before the commencement of any work.
- Word of mouth.
- The Parish Council will encourage public input in the setting of their annual precept.
- A Facebook page has been set up to attract a wider range of parishioners and is regularly monitored to test the interest generated.
- Drop-in sessions are arranged at village halls and the Parish Council Offices as and when important community issues emerge.
- There is regular communication with Brewood Tennis Club, Brewood Parish Sports Association, Coven Heath Allotments Association, Coven Heath Community Association, Brewood Rotary and Satellite Rotary and Coven Playing Field Committee.
- Regular communication with organisations such as Staffordshire Playing Field Association, Fields in Trust, Staffordshire Parish Council Association, Society of Local Council Clerks and ACAS.
- Our 5-year Business Plan is reviewed and updated annually and is publicized on the Parish Council's website.

The above list is not exhaustive and any additional opportunities for public involvement will be explored and encouraged.