

# **Chigwell Parish Council**

## **Communications and Community**

### **Engagement Statement 2025**

First approved: January 2025

Review due: January 2026

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#### Introduction

Chigwell Parish Council wants to place the community at the heart of everything it does. The council is committed to high standards of communication and engagement. It wants to ensure that local people have a voice and have every opportunity to be involved in the decisions that affect them and their community. The council encourages residents to be involved in decision making to secure better services and to create a more active and informed community. The council wants to work effectively and co-operatively with partners.

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#### Mission, Aims and Objectives

Chigwell Parish Council aims to be ambitious and aspirational. Its mission is to 'deliver quality services to Chigwell'.

The Council is committed to:

- representing and promoting the interests of the area and all its people
- working closely with and listening to residents, businesses and community groups
- engaging with as many people as possible who want to participate in decision-making, monitoring services and planning for the future
- ensuring that local democracy is enhanced by getting closer to the community and being accessible to diverse people and groups in the community
- ensuring that involvement is actively encouraged by using a range of approaches to public involvement and community engagement
- acting with openness and transparency in everything it does

- enabling an active, involved and empowered citizenship through engagement with residents, reaching out to otherwise excluded groups to promote equality of opportunity and in particular seeking the views of young people
- communicating information to the community clearly, timely, factually and appropriately
- improving communication with partners and being actively involved in various networking organisations and partners
- promoting the image and raising the reputation of the council
- ensuring the resources, training, advice and assistance is available to meet the aims and objectives.

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## Defining the Community

The council considers the community to include:

- residents of Chigwell
- users of Parish Council services and other services
- the Head Teacher and Governors of the schools
- children and young people who live and, or, go to school in Chigwell
- retail and other businesses in the community
- interest groups, clubs and societies
- voluntary and support organisations
- groups of people defined by a common factor such as age, disability, faith, and other groups
- Councillors and staff of Essex County Council
- Councillors and staff of Epping Forest District Council
- Essex Climate Action Commission
- Essex Wildlife Trust
- Epping Forest Heritage Trust
- The Rural Community Council of Essex
- the Police and other public services such as the NHS Councillors, and
- the Parish Clerk and all Parish Council staff and volunteers.

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## Provision of Information to the Community and Opportunities for Community Involvement

Information provided by the Parish Council complies with the Transparency Code and data protection legislation. The council is

committed to providing information to the community and providing opportunities for community involvement and appropriate resources for these as follows:

- contact details for the council, individual Councillors, the Council office including public opening hours and the Parish Clerk are made available on the noticeboards in each ward and on the Council's website. The website aims to communicate both council and community issues, events and achievements to everyone in our parish
- notices of meetings and key council communications are posted on the council's noticeboards and on the website, and where possible on social media
- notices positively remind members of the community of their entitlement to attend meetings and talk to the council and each meeting and committee meeting will have an agenda item for public participation
- From 2024/25 an annual report published and a summary of this is published on the website
- Parish Planning is carried out with a full commitment to consultation and engagement and will form the basis for planning council priorities
- when undertaking community engagement, the council will make meaningful efforts to reach out to people whose voices may not normally be heard, and make every effort to ensure that a diverse range of views are represented when listening to community feedback and developing services, budgets and and business planning for the future
- when undertaking consultation and engagement, the council will be mindful that not all people have access to the internet and will consider creative ways to ensure people can have their say and be involved
- councillors will be mindful of opportunities to listen to residents and others and ensure their views are included in council business and activities.

In addition to the above, our website:

- provides details of council services and activities and gives access to a range of documents as well as information about council services

- states links to partner services and access to planning applications determined by the district council
- has specific links to social media which is used to try to communicate and engage with residents
- has dedicated pages for encouraging local democracy and getting people involved in what is happening and what can happen in the villages
- aims to publicise and encourage participation in important meetings that affect residents and businesses, whether or not the meetings are part of council business
- our related social media pages positively address local issues and provide a platform for people to have their say on a wide range of community issues.

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#### Opportunities for Formal Representation to the Council

Residents, community organisations and businesses are encouraged to attend meetings and raise issues, concerns and ideas during public participation (see also Public Participation Policy). They are also encouraged to send written representations to the Clerk at least ten days before the date of the next meeting. With agreement of the Clerk, these representations can be included on the agenda for the next meeting and councillors will receive information with the agenda. After formal discussion, the applicant will receive a written response of any decision or action taken by the council.

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#### Involvement in Partnerships

The council seeks to work in partnership with other organisations. The council is also actively involved in community organisations and activities and some Parish or District councillors may be trustees for some of these organisations.

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#### Role of Councillors and Officers

The council recognises the importance and value of engaging with the local community and the unique perspectives that brings. Councillors and officers will continue to provide a role to encourage and engage the local community in the council's work through methods set out in this document and in their normal work routine.

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### Specific Areas for Community Involvement

The community will be actively consulted and engaged with on the following:

- Parish Planning: a comprehensive and detailed plan will be developed, implemented and evaluated
- any large scale project the council wishes to undertake
- The council will establish a specific communication and community engagement plan at the start of each process.

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### The Role of Volunteers

The council recognises the importance of the role of volunteers in the delivery of services and the value that is added to council activities by volunteers. The council encourages volunteers to become involved and supports and celebrates their contributions.