

# HUNTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

## Community Engagement Strategy

Huntington Parish Council has developed this document as a means of exploring how it can improve its engagement with residents and the community. It is intended to provide a framework of best practice; to draw together activities and practices which have been developed over the years to produce a closer working relationship with the community it represents.

This is the first revision of this document undertaken by the Parish Council.

Huntington Parish Council has an electorate of just over 1860 a figure which is expected to increase to 2544 over the next five years as a result of on-going development the majority of which is take place on the former Saughton army camp.

Although the Parish is classed as rural it is within walking distance of, and has a frequent bus service to Chester. The Parish benefits from a number of shops, a public house, dentist, village hall, playing field and primary school. Other facilities within walking distance including a large supermarket and High Schools. The majority of the Parish has access to good broadband services.

However Huntington, like many communities is ever changing, this will be further influenced by the development of the former Saughton Camp.

As a result this document is not intended to become a static document but one which will evolve over time reflecting the changes in the community of the Huntington Parish.

It is therefore essential that this strategy is subject to regular review and change at regular intervals.

### Aims – Inform, Consult & involve

The aim of Huntington Parish Council's Engagement Strategy is to continuously improve the way in which the Parish Council engages and consults with the community and key partners.

To this end all residents should be:-

- Informed of the council's activities and projects
- Consulted on council's activities and projects
- Have the opportunity to be involved in the council's activities and projects

Resulting in the views/opinions of the community becoming an integral part of Huntington Parish Council's decision making process, improving the services provided by the council and ensuring the council better reflects the community it represents.

## Objective

- Use consultation to improve the services the council delivers, to ensure these services reflect the community's needs and aspirations.

## Strategy – Communication & Consultation

Huntington Parish Council will achieve its objectives through the following ways:-

### 1) Communication

The Parish Council recognises the need to use different methods of communication to reach all sections of the community.

Newsletter - The Parish Council is committed to producing a regular newsletter (which will be distributed to every house in the Parish. The newsletter includes information about the activities of the Parish Council as well as contact details. The Parish Council also produces an Annual Report.

Website – [www.huntington-chester.co.uk](http://www.huntington-chester.co.uk) – The role of the council website has changed with the creation of the Council's Face Book Page. The Website will be used to provide information about the Council's activities including meeting agendas and minutes as well as information about other organisations in the area. The website will provide more detailed information than the Faced Book pages.

Face Book – The Council has establish a Face Book page to provide the Parish Council a forum to disseminate information as quickly as possible and provide a forum for public comment and debate. Face Book will provide a more informal avenue for the Parish Council to communicate with residents.

Meetings – The council's meetings are advertised on the council's notice board and also in other places in the parish including in the local public house. Meetings are open to the public and include an opportunity for the public to speak at part of the meeting. The Parish Council has established a distribution list for distribution of Council agendas (December 2014 includes 73 email addresses)

Councillors – The councillors are well known members of the community and are easily accessible for those residents who wish to contact them. Many are also members of other organisations within the community including the Village Hall Committee. This provides a valuable opportunity for councillors to learn about the needs and aspirations of the area as well as to tell residents what the council is doing.

### 2) Consultation

Huntington Parish Council will consult residents, both formally and informally, at every opportunity when making important decisions.

The Parish Council will also seek to consult with all sections of the community including the traditionally hard to reach sections of the community.

## Partnership Working

To achieve the council's objectives it is essential for the parish council/councillors to support other groups, organisations and individuals within the community to achieve their aspirations.

It is also important that the council works with other authorities providing services within the area including the principle authority, Cheshire West and Chester Council and the Police.

## Managing Expectation

The Parish Council is aware that increased communications with residents has resulted in an increased workload and it is therefore important to manage both the increased work load and residents expectations.

## Council Response Times

The Parish Council will respond to all communications whether by telephone, email or postal letter within 10 working days of receipt of the communication with the requested information or with information regarding actions being taken where appropriate.

## Measuring Success of the Strategy

For the strategy to be effective it must be reviewed in terms of its appropriateness and relevance to the changing community in Huntington but also in terms of how effective it has been.

This can be achieved through monitoring a number of different aspects of the councils activities:-

- Responses to council consultations
- Residents contact with clerk and councillors
- Residents attendance to council meetings

## Review of Strategy

The success of the strategy will be reviewed annually.

**Ann Wright**  
**Clerk to Huntington Parish Council**  
**January 2015**