

Bramley Parish Council - Community Engagement Strategy

1. Introduction

2010 saw the publication of the Bramley Parish Plan, which was initiated by the Parish Council and delivered by a steering group, and is a summary of the aspirations of residents and employees in Bramley, for the economic, environmental and social development of Bramley for the future. The whole community was involved in identifying these needs and as such, the Parish Plan is a tangible expression of the local voice.

Bramley Parish Council is committed to engaging residents by encouraging them to become actively involved in decisions that affect them and the whole community, to delivering better services and to improving the quality of life of residents by creating a more active and informed community.

Bramley Parish Council has recently been awarded Quality Parish Council status, an achievement we are proud of and one which demonstrates our desire to measure the quality of the service we provide, and to benchmark future service delivery.

2. Aims

The aim of the community engagement strategy is to:

- Improve the way in which the Council communicates with members of the community.
- To listen to the views of residents on important issues
- To use these views to deliver better services
- To improve the long term social, economic, and environmental well-being of residents.
- To plan future development of the parish in accordance with the needs and priorities of the community.

3. Objectives

- To use a variety of methods to make information available.
- To actively facilitate and encourage community engagement
- To proactively engage with all sections of the community
- To ensure that decisions meet the needs of the community by involving members of the community in the decision making process
- To work in partnership with other organisations and/or authorities to improve the quality and delivery of services
- To enhance the well-being of members of the community

4. Communication with the community

Information is made available in a variety of ways to ensure that all sections of the community are reached.

- Parish Council notice boards – information including agendas, minutes, contact details are displayed on the two main village notice boards and on 10 other boards around the parish.
- Bramley Update – all parish council news will be reported in the monthly email newsletter ‘Bramley Update’ which goes out to an ever increasing readership of 400+ individuals.
- Parish magazine – parish council news will be publicised in the monthly parish magazine, published and delivered by Holy Trinity Church to around 400 households in Bramley.
- Surrey Advertiser – relevant local parish news will be made available to the editor for inclusion, in the weekly local newspaper ‘Surrey Advertiser’.
- Parish Council website – agendas, minutes, planning application lists, local news and additional information and consultations will be made available on the parish council owned and managed website.
- Information leaflets – information leaflets about the work of the parish council will be made available in local places such as parish council office, library, post office, local churches, local pubs etc.

Where information affects a specific section of the community, the council will ensure that the information is delivered directly to the village organisation representing that section e.g. residents groups, elderly groups, Bramley Village Society etc

5. Opportunities for community involvement

Parish Council meetings – meetings are open to the public and a time set aside during the meeting for public comment. Residents are also encouraged to submit items for inclusion on the agenda through a councillor or the clerk.

Councillor surgeries – Parish Council surgeries take place in the half hour before a parish council meeting begins and give residents an opportunity to discuss concerns or questions about local issues with a parish councillor.

Additional public meetings – Occasionally additional matters of local importance raise the need for a separate meeting for parishioners, managed by the parish council. These will be widely publicised and open to all.

Clerk's office – members of the public may call in to the parish clerk's office during normal opening hours to discuss local issues and obtain local information.

6. Consultation

Consultations and surveys on important local issues will be carried out. The Council will ensure that those most affected by an issue will be given the opportunity to voice an opinion. Results of consultations or surveys will be made available to all members of the parish. The annual Parish Assembly will continue to be used to obtain the views of residents on matters affecting the community.

7. Partnership working

- The Parish Council is committed to working with local voluntary and community groups to improve the quality of life for residents in the parish.
- The Parish Council will work with Local Authorities (District, County, Police) to ensure an improvement in the quality and delivery of services.
- The Parish Council will work with neighbouring parish councils to find a solution to common problems.
- The Parish Council will continue to support and engage with local organisations to assist them in meeting their own aims and objectives.
- The Parish Council will continue to support local projects and events.

A copy of the 2010 Parish Plan has been delivered to each house in the parish and members of the community will be encouraged to become actively involved in addressing the issues which have been highlighted in the plan, including:

- Reducing traffic speeds, reducing congestion, reducing traffic volume.
- Improving broadband and mobile phone coverage
- Improving facilities for young people
- Reducing anti-social behaviour
- Better local communication
- Improving levels of affordable housing

The community engagement strategy will be reviewed annually to assess its effectiveness and amended as necessary.

This document adopted at a meeting of Bramley Parish Council 24th March 2011.