

# Pillaton Parish Council

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## **Community Engagement**

### **Introduction**

Effective Community engagement enables a wide spread of residents to be actively involved in Council decisions which affect the Community. They can shape the services that the Council delivers especially during the climate of increasing demands and decreasing budgets.

Engagement aims to create a more transparent and accountable Council, empowering the Electorate to evaluate service provision and to ensure that the Parish Council meets statutory duties and its commitment towards local democracy.

### **How do the Parish Council engage?**

Engagement involves social media such as the dedicated Council Facebook is a widely used resource. The Council can gauge what residents think and want from Services, as they are able to influence policy and decision making. The Facebook strategy is a way of ensuring that feedback and 'wish lists' are fed in quickly to Councillors. The Village Newsletter is used widely to inform the Community of local groups and associations.

The tried and tested communication means of letters and telephone calls are used, along with a periodic Newsletter (hard copy) delivered so that hard to reach groups like the elderly or disabled residents who may not have use of social media or computers are not excluded. Information is posted on the Notice boards. A local pub monthly quiz can be organised by Councillors for local Charities which attracts local groups and generates discussions between residents and Councillors.

A 'Survey Monkey' is used to capture local opinion when the Parish Council wishes to gather opinion over a community initiative such as playground facilities etc.

The Council can engage with Saltash.net (the local secondary school), or any other local school to arrange a Q&A session between pupils and Councillors and encourage participation of young citizens, and possible future Councillors.

### **Community Action Teams (CAT)**

The (CAT) can be a Councillor led team, attracting residents of all ages and backgrounds who volunteer in Community projects (Litter tidies / hedge trimming / tree planting etc). Many volunteers have limited time available for Community involvement, do not wish to stand as a Councillor, but care for the Community and are willing to give of their spare time, particularly in



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respect to Bio-diversity matters. Volunteers support the Councillors. Evidence shows that active volunteering brings an improvement in quality of life and mental well-being, especially during the recent Coronavirus pandemic period.

## **National Standards of Community Engagement**

The Standards, launched in 2005 inform the public sector of ‘good practice principles’, describing the main elements of effective Community Engagement.

Christopher Cook – Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

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