



Brixham Town Council

Community Engagement Strategy

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| Date of Adoption | |
| Reviewed | |
| Next Review Date | |
| Written by | Tracy Hallett, Town Clerk |

Introduction

The Town Council recognises that it is uniquely placed to represent the views of its constituents and provide community leadership. This strategy sets out how it engages with the local community to identify its needs and aspirations and how it can improve community engagement to give people a voice and involve them in decisions affecting their quality of life.

Vision

This strategy supports the council's vision of Brixham as:

- A Town that protects the environment in which it is situated and embraces the modern world.
- A lifestyle that benefits from improving the living standards of its people.
- A Town that enjoys a safe, secure and healthy way of life.
- A caring Town that provides for all its age groups.
- A Town that takes every opportunity to help itself.
- In the face of changes to the traditional industries, such as fishing, a forward looking Town adopting new activities to sustain the economic viability of the area.

This strategy provides a focus for all engagement activities, policies and processes to align with the council's objectives to create an improved quality of life by working with people and partners, devolving decision-making and empowering individuals and communities to contribute and influence services.

Aims

Brixham Town Council aims to:

- Represent and promote the interests of Brixham and its people of all ages in all its activities;
- Provide the best possible amenities and services by the efficient use of available resources;
- Actively involve local people in decisions affecting activities in the local area;
- Promote equality of opportunity and oppose discrimination;
- Be open and accountable in all it does;
- Enhance quality of life by protecting and enhancing Brixham's ecological and environmental assets.

In order to achieve these aims, the Council will:

- Work closely with residents, local businesses and community groups;
- Engage with as many people as possible who want to participate in decision making, monitoring services and planning for the future (particularly those hard to reach groups);
- Ensure, that through the use of a wide range of approaches to public involvement and community engagement, we actively encourage the involvement of residents to capture their views and learn their concerns, and effectively use those views as an integral part of the decision-making process;
- Ensure that residents have opportunities to be heard at every stage, and the capacity to be effective citizens.

Defining the community

The Town Council considers the community of Brixham to consist of:

- All residents of the town;
- Users of the Town Council's services;

- Those who work or own businesses within the town;
- Young people who live and/or go to school within the town; and local voluntary organisations, clubs and societies and any group or organisation that represents some or any of the members of the above sections of the community.
- Additionally, the Town Council recognises that there are certain bodies that are crucial to the quality of life in Brixham and aims to maintain excellent working relationships with these bodies, including Torbay Council, Torbay Harbour Authority, the Police and the neighbouring town and parish councils.

How community engagement is facilitated

The Town Council provides the following:

- A website with full details of the Council's work;
- A quarterly newsletter delivered to all residents across the town and also available from the Council offices and on the website;
- An annual report available from the Council offices and on the website
- Regularly updated noticeboards promoting the work of the Council, its partners and other local organisations;
- Residents may contact the Town Council offices in person and by telephone Monday to Friday 9am – 3.00pm with an answerphone provided for messages outside these hours.
- Details of how to contact the Council office and Councillors are provided in the newsletter and the website;
- Ensuring all meetings of the Council are open to the public and press with a period set aside for residents to speak;
- Consultation events providing opportunities for residents to give their views on plans for new facilities, services in the town and any other important issue affecting the community;
- Additional public meetings are arranged to address controversial issues;
- Holding a wide range of community events which provide opportunities to engage with the public and raise community spirit;
- Press releases to manage the media effectively to promote and defend the Council;
- Use of the Council logo to promote the work of the Council;
- Good internal communications – making sure staff and members are informed and give out consistent messages and representations on behalf of the community.
- Town Councillors represent the Council on various outside bodies to ensure good two-way communication with regular reports of these meetings made to the Council.
- Councillors provide informal opportunities for residents to speak to them.

Improving community engagement

The Town Council will:

- Publicise the positive results from working with the community and other partners;
- Work closely with local Youth Groups to ensure the views of young people are taken into account;
- Identify new opportunities to work with local community groups;
- Make full use of modern communication methods;
- Review the Community Engagement Strategy annually to ensure its relevance.