

Wigginton Parish Council

Communication & Engagement Strategy 2024

Introduction

This strategy will guide the Parish Council's communications activity with everyone who comes into contact with us either directly or indirectly. It is based on the guiding principle that communication is two-way and should enable the Parish Council to inform people about what we do and to actively listen to what people tell us about the service improvements they would like.

Aim

To develop effective communications with all of the Parish Council's stakeholders.

Objectives

- To effectively inform residents and stakeholders of the aims, objectives and activity of the Parish Council.
- To enable the residents and stakeholders to be involved with the Parish Council.
- To use a variety of communication methods to ensure that the way we communicate keeps everyone included.
- To build trust by being open and transparent.

Stakeholders

We want to reach everyone with an interest in the village of Wigginton. People who live, work or do business here and people who have an influence in the future of the area. Including:

Village residents (individuals)	Local businesses and employers
Community groups & organizations	Voluntary groups
Village Hall Committee	Agencies and partners (inc local police)
Wigginton Primary school	Younger people
Older people	Sports clubs
Parish Clerk	Parish councillors
Dacorum Borough councillors	Hertfordshire County councillors
MPs	Opinion formers (inc politicians and journalists)

The Role of Parish Councillors

Parish Councillors represent the community in which they live and are governed by a Code of Conduct which encourages open, informed, timely and courteous communication at all times.

Context of Messages

It is important that all Parish Council communications have as much impact as possible. Therefore ALL messages will be:

- Short and to the point
- Not conflicting
- In plain English
- Focused on involvement
- Based on fact, information, action or achievement

To avoid dilution or contradiction, the following key points will underpin all Parish Council communications:

- Wigginton Parish Council MAKES a difference
- The Parish Council WANTS to hear the opinion of others

Let us WORK TOGETHER for a better future for Wigginton – the Parish Council need the help and support of the community and our partners to make improvements where they are needed

Let us CELEBRATE what has already happened – positive messages focusing on what's good about living or working in the village

Methods

The Parish Council will use a variety of methods based on what reaches people most effectively and has most credibility. This includes:

Parish Councillors contact details	published on the Parish Council website to encourage open access
Parish Council website	http://www.wiggintonhertspc.org.uk
Parish Council notice boards	located outside the village hall and by the sports field and updated regularly. The notice board outside the Village Hall shall be used only to publish information relating to the Parish Council, Dacorum Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council and the Village Hall. Any other advertisement i.e community groups or private businesses shall be posted on the notice board at the entrance to the Sports Field
Parish Council newsletter	an annual publication called The Oddy launched in April, back copies on the website. The Oddy is delivered by volunteers to all households and copies are left in the Wigginton Shop
Parish Council meetings	all meetings (including committees) open to the public and press, dates available on the web site and notice board
Parish Council agendas and minutes	available to all on the web site and agendas are posted on the notice board outside the Village Hall
Parish Council Clerk	can be contacted by email clerk@wiggintonhertspc.org.uk
Village web site	Village activities advertised on the village web site https://www.wiggintonhertspc.org.uk
Village Facebook page	https://www.facebook.com/WiggintonVillage
Press releases	to local media on significant points of interest/achievement
Church magazine	The Chair writes an article for the quarterly magazine on Parish Council decisions
Surveys	These will be issued every 2 years to ascertain the views of the villagers
Hill Top Villages email	To build communication across the local villages, residents are encouraged to join the news@newgrapevine.co.uk email

Emergencies

Where there is an emergency in or near the village, this will be communicated on the Parish Council and village web sites, as well as through the news@newgravevine.co.uk email system.

Parish Council Spokesperson

In the event of any media enquiry, the Parish Clerk (in conjunction with the Chairman of the Parish Council), will be responsible for issuing a response from the Parish Council. Individual members of the Parish Council must make clear – if they are approached for comment directly – whether they are giving an individual opinion or will be referring the matter to the Parish Clerk for a formal Parish Council response. In any event, the Parish Clerk must be notified of any contact with the media as soon as possible.

The Parish Clerk shall be responsible for providing the copy and content for the Parish Magazine and ensure that all deadlines in this respect are met.

The Parish Council website will updated and edited by the Parish Clerk and a nominated Parish Councillor representative. However, it is the responsibility of all Parish Councillors to check the site regularly for any issues of inaccuracy or omissions and to inform the Parish Clerk of these if and when they arise.

Involvement

Wherever possible, the Parish Council, its committees and working groups should actively seek to consult a wider audience and encourage and support the involvement of residents and other interested parties in its work. Where this involvement is not possible, the reasons for this should be communicated swiftly, openly and transparently.

The Parish Council will:

- Continue to attract as many participants as possible to both the Annual and Monthly Parish meetings.
- Continue to support the village Neighbourhood Watch Scheme
- Continue to liaise with the local police on local issues and invite them biannually to present at the Parish Council meeting
- Continue to support local groups and organisations and engage with them in meeting their own aims and objectives eg Sustainable Wigginton, Wigginton WI
- Support local projects and participate in local events. This will assist in raising the awareness of the Council and its aims and objectives
- Support the work of local initiatives e.g. Sustainable Wigginton
- Facilitate and launch new local initiatives

The Parish Council will consult on all major developments in the village, in particular those that affect a large number of parishioners e.g. new housing, traffic calming, major planning applications and uses for the Sports Field.

What Wigginton Parish Council asks its residents to do:

To actively review the notice boards and/or the parish council website and/or the annual parish newsletter for information about meetings, events and decisions. Links to our website with new information will also be posted onto the village web site and facebook page which has a growing 'reach' within the community.

To recognise engagement opportunities and utilise them by responding to surveys, letters, questionnaires etc.

To address comments, suggestions or complaints in writing by letter; or by email; or by telephone, using contact information available on the Parish Council website and displayed on the village notice boards. Alternatively, to attend the monthly Parish Council meeting and make use of the public interval.