Appleby-in-Westmorland Town Council

Community Engagement Policy

Appleby-in-Westmorland Town Council is committed to community engagement and supports and encourages the community to share their aspirations for the town with the Council.

The Council achieves this through the following communication channels:

Communications

The Council supports the following specific communications channels:

- Heart of Eden Newsletter – Council report in newsletter; distributed monthly
- Noticeboards - situated at the Moot Hall and Shire Hall and updated as required
- Website and Social Media – the Council uses its website to publish all legally required information together with news items and events (applebytown.gov.uk/). It also uses Facebook to provide information and promote events and consultations. The Council's Facebook pages are "Appleby Town Council" and "Appleby Tourist Information Centre".
- Comments Form – the Council has a comments form which members of the community can use to bring matters to the attention of the Council. The forms are available from the Council Offices or via the website.
- Press Releases and Media Engagement – The Council will, when required, issue press releases and engage with the media (newspapers, radio and television) to promote either Council or community activities.
- Annual Report – the Annual Report is published annually in time for the Town Meeting. It includes a summary of Council activities for the last year, the draft accounts and the action plan for the next year.

Council Offices and Tourist Information Centre

The Council Offices are open from 9am noon until 3pm Monday to Friday. The Tourist Information Centre opening hours vary depending on the time of year, but they are the first point of face to face contact for engagement with the Council.

Council Meetings

Each Council meeting agenda includes an item "Questions to be received from the public". This item is restricted to 15 minutes in total and is conducted in accordance with standing orders, with each person having 3 minutes to speak. At the Mayor's discretion the 3 minutes can be extended if deemed appropriate.

In all respects the Council meeting must comply with the Council's Standing Orders ensuring good practice is maintained.

Town Meeting

The Annual Town Meeting is an opportunity to bring the community together and allow electors to question and review how the Council is helping shape the community. It is the responsibility of the Town Clerk to timetable a meeting date, organise the venue and ensure that Town and Unitary Authority Councillors attend and have a part to play. The Council should determine the “interest theme” for each town meeting to encourage community engagement. The main objective of the meeting is to provide and encourage two-way communication between the community and Councillors.

Parish Meetings

From time to time the Council may decide that an item warrants being dealt with through a specially convened Parish Meeting. The Clerk will arrange the meeting venue with any costs being met by the Council. The Mayor will normally chair any Parish Meeting, but in exceptional circumstances the Mayor can appoint a deputy to this role. The Clerk will prepare and post the agenda on the Council’s website and noticeboards and take the minutes. The minute format and content will follow the agenda and comply with Standing Order requirements.

Consultation

The Council should aim to consult regularly with the community, ranging from light touch opportunities to formal consultation programmes, where information must be disseminated widely and feedback obtained to shape Council policy and demonstrate democracy in action. The Council will utilise a variety of methods and tools to undertake consultation with the community which may include:

- surveys and opinion polls;
- interviews, meetings and drop-in events;
- focus groups and workshops;
- meetings with other organisations; and

Post-Consultation Engagement

Keeping the community informed – consultation activities are often surrounded by a great deal of energy and enthusiasm; it is important to ensure that the community is kept informed of the progress and any future opportunities for their involvement.

Data Protection – It is important to ensure that individual participants in the consultation process are not identified in the data used. The Council only will hold actual responses for 30 days before destruction by shredding.

Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed bi-annually by Appleby-in-Westmorland Town Council at a Full Council Meeting.

This policy has been agreed and approved by Appleby-in-Westmorland Town Council.

Cllr P Davidson

Cllr Pamela Davidson
Chair of Appleby-in-Westmorland Town Council

Adopted by Appleby-in Westmorland Council on 19th March 2025
Review Date: March 2027