

POLICY

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

What is in the Policy?

This policy sets out how communication, meetings & consultations are taken care of in a way that ensures all bodies are satisfied.

Date Adopted

Feb 2024

Review Date

Dec 2026

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1. Policy statement

- 1.1. Ware Town Council (The Council) recognises the need to consider the impact of its actions on others and the surrounding environment. Whilst recognising that not every individual or group will wish to engage, the Council will make it easier for those who do wish to be involved.
- 1.2. The Council considers that the community of Ware comprises;
 - a. All residents of the town
 - b. All users of the Council's services
 - c. All those who work in Ware
 - d. All young people who go to school or college in Ware
 - e. All voluntary organisations, clubs, societies and community groups.

- 1.3. The Council recognises that other bodies are crucial to the quality of life in Ware and will maintain strong working relationships with East Herts Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Police and other local Town and Parish Councils.
- 1.4. The Council defines communication as the process of informing the community about decisions that have been made or the passing on of information.
- 1.5. The Council defines engagement as involving the community to help form opinion and review decisions.
- 1.6. The Council is always open to receiving both positive and negative feedback and has a commitment to encouraging the community to engage with the Council.

2. Communication

- 2.1. The Town Council website is the primary source of information on the Council for the community and it is kept up to date with content and routinely monitored. The Council aims to actively publish a wide range of information on the Council and its activities.
- 2.2. The Council will make the best possible use of social media and publish relevant content. Social media account inboxes are monitored routinely for direct messages.
- 2.3. The Council will prepare a digital newsletter on the website which is published to email subscribers.
- 2.4. The Council will use its noticeboards at the Priory and around the town.
- 2.5. The Council will display leaflets about its activities and community activities in the reception at Ware Priory.
- 2.6. The Council will take measures, where practical, to reach those in the community who are not online and distribute selected Council publications to households.

3. Meetings

- 3.1. Meetings of the Council and its committees are open to the public and include the opportunity for members of the town to engage with councillors. All meetings permit public participation.
- 3.2. The Annual Town Meeting provides an opportunity for electors to engage with the Council and to ask questions about the work of the Council and local issues.
- 3.3. The Council will continue to provide opportunities for members of the public to discuss issues with councillors.
- 3.4. The Council will continue to appoint members to represent the Council on community organisations as required.

4. Consultation

- 4.1. When the Town Council is seeking views on a specific project or idea it will consult with the community.

- 4.2. Whilst most consultations will be open to the whole community it may on occasion consult with specific stakeholders only.
- 4.3. When planning a consultation, the Council will identify the key stakeholders for that specific consultation exercise to ensure they are directly consulted.
- 4.4. Consultations will be publicised as widely as possible and will have a defined end date for submissions.
- 4.5. The Council will be clear about why it is consulting and how the consultation will be used in the Council's decision-making process.
- 4.6. The timing of consultations will be considered for example to coincide with events or to avoid clashes with holidays.
- 4.7. The Council will consider the format of the consultation which may include: a. Open consultation on the Council website b. Consultation documents at key venues around the town c. Direct consultation (e.g. letters/leaflets/social media etc) d. Focus groups e. Consultation engagement events (e.g. public meetings, exhibitions, at events).

Review Summary

Date	Update
January 2024	Revisions made to update policy
May 2021	Readopted with no revisions
September 2019	Adopted