

Statement of Intent for Community Engagement .



Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council.

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Aims and Objectives:

Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council is committed to high standards of engagement with its community. Our Council is part of a tier of local government which belongs to, is part of and is directly accountable to its local community. Councillors play an important role as they are elected to make decisions on matters affecting our Parishes. We aim to make a measurable difference to the quality of life on the community we serve and to be responsive to the needs of our community. This statement sets out how we ensure the community is kept informed about and can contribute to the activities and decision-making of this Council to the benefit of these Parishes.

What is our Community ?

We believe our community is everyone within the boundaries of the Parishes of Aldington and Bonnington including all ages, any organisations, groups and individuals within it. We also recognise that residents pay for the activities of the Parish Council and that visitors to our community form an important part of the vibrancy of community life. We understand that there are certain bodies that are crucial to local quality of life and we will strive to achieve excellent working relationships with these bodies including Village organisations, the Police, neighbouring Councils and other tiers of local government.

Provision of Information to the Community.

This Council ensures that the main documents which reflect its decisions are published and readily available for the public to view. These documents include the agendas, minutes and annual reports of the Council which are:

- Published on the Council's website www.aldingtonandbonningtonpc.kentparishes.gov.uk
- Posted on the Council's noticeboards.
- Available to view, by request and prior arrangement with the Parish Clerk.
- The Council also summarises key issues in the Parish Magazine.
- You can view the council's Freedom of Information Publication Scheme on the Council's website www.aldingtonandbonningtonpc.kentparishes.gov.uk

Opportunities for involvement and representations to the Council.

Public announcements about Council meetings contain an invitation to the public and press to attend. These give you an indication of the business to be transacted so that you can decide whether you want to attend or make your views known by some other means prior to the meeting. Agendas are always available on the Council's website www.aldingtonandbonningtonpc.kentparishes.gov.uk

Meetings are the forum for business and decision making and it is important that this business can be conducted with ample time for due consideration of issues before Councillors. However, at Council meetings there is also an opportunity for the public to make representations in person prior to decisions being made. We welcome representations but inevitably have to apply a time limit and if you are concerned that there might be insufficient time to make your points known, you might wish to make representations in writing prior to the meeting.

We give representatives from the Police and other tiers of local government an opportunity to make reports to Council meetings. This provides the public and Councillors with more information and an opportunity to ask questions on matters of interest to them.

It is the intention of the Council to call an Annual Parish Meeting for each of the Parishes of Aldington and Bonnington between March 1st and June 1st each year. This is your meeting and you will have an opportunity to hear from many community organisations and to ask them questions. It is also possible to raise matters of concern to the community.

Involvement in Partnerships

The Council has representation on the Aldington Village Hall Committee and attends occasional meetings of other bodies which make decisions affecting the local community. Information obtained from these meetings is reported to Council meetings.

Role of Councillors, Chairman and Clerk.

Councillors are the decision-makers of the Council. The contact details are published on the Council's website www.aldingtonandbonningtonpc.kentparishes.gov.uk and in the Parish magazine. The details can also be obtained from the Parish Clerk upon request. Councillors welcome contact with members of the public, endeavour to be available immediately prior to Council meetings for anybody who wishes to speak with them and they will listen to the representations you make to them at Council whether you attend in person, ask another person to raise matters for you or provide your comments in writing.

The Chairman is appointed under the first point of business at the Council's Annual Meeting. He remains in office until his successor is elected at the next Annual Meeting unless he resigns, ceases to be eligible or is disqualified. At all meetings of the Council which he attends, the Chairman must preside and manage the orderly conduct of affairs. Whilst the Chairman should be consulted on the Agenda content, the legal signatory is the Clerk. The Chairman is responsible for ensuring that decisions by the Council are only taken on items on the Agenda.

Although the Clerk acts as Secretary to Council meetings and so prepares the Minutes, it is the Chairman (or other person in the Chair) who must sign them once they are agreed as an accurate statement of proceedings. The Chairman cannot make a formal decision on behalf of the Council.

The Clerk is answerable to the Council as a body rather than any individual. He/she implements the decisions of the Council and provides independent and professional advice, information and administrative support. The Clerk is usually the "proper officer". The Clerk is also the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). As RFO, the Clerk prepares the

Budget for Council to debate, keeps the books of account, arranges payment of all invoices by cheques signed by two Councillors, submits VAT returns, prepares the year-end accounts, submits the Annual Financial Return to the Council's External Auditor, reviews and renews the insurance.

The contact details for the Clerk to the Council are published on Agendas, the Council's noticeboards and the Council's website. The Clerk is the appropriate contact in most cases for raising matters with or requesting information from the Council.

Please feel free to contact the Clerk for more information on anything in this Statement.

Specific areas for Community Involvement.

In some circumstances, we also provide additional information sheets and/or provide additional public meetings in the event that exceptional issues arise which are of particular interest to the Community. We envisage that these might include plans for significant planning development, exceptional spending plans and any emergency situations that arise.

Contact details for the Council Clerk are:

Tel: 01233 721757 email: aldbonmail@gmail.com