

ASHURST WOOD PARISH COUNCIL

Community Involvement: Statement of Intent

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES - To make measurable improvements to the quality of life of people who live in, work in, and visit Ashurst Wood Parish, through actions to improve long term economic, social and environmental well-being within the financial and legal obligations placed on the council by local and national government.

DEFINING THE COMMUNITY – Ashurst Wood Parish Council intend to continue to consult and proactively engage with: other local authorities that have influence on Ashurst Wood Parish, neighbouring parish councils, the police, health authorities, schools, all age groups regardless of ability and ethnic origin in the community, local organisations and any other group or organisation that has an interest in, or impact on, Ashurst Wood Parish.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO THE COMMUNITY - The council will make information including Agendas, Minutes and the Annual Report detailing current spending available to the public, through the following:

- Ashurst Wood Parish Council Website
<http://www.ashurstwoodparishcouncil.gov.uk>
- Newsletters and the Annual Report
- The Parish Notice Boards
- By request to the Clerk

The council had adopted the requirements detailed in the Freedom of Information Act whereby the public can request sight of any council documentation (with the exception of Confidential items). Most of these documents are readily accessible on the councils website, but may also be obtained (for a fee) from the Clerk to the Council.

The Clerk deals with any queries relating to any of the three tiers of local government.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT - At each monthly Council Meeting a period of fifteen minutes is set aside for electors of Ashurst Wood Parish to ask questions of the council or make comments to the council. Members of the public are permitted to attend all the Council's Committee meetings (unless identified as Confidential) and a period of 15 minutes is set aside for Public Speaking, prior every Parish Council Committee Meeting. Public Speaking time may be extended at the discretion of the Chairman. The Public are welcome to speak to individual Councillors on other occasions, either by appointment through the Clerk or at Village events.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FORMAL REPRESENTATIONS TO THE COUNCIL – the Council will accept representation from groups/organisations/individuals for items to be included on the agenda for discussion at Committee or Council meetings. For inclusion at these meetings, written details MUST be received at the Clerk at least SEVEN working days prior to the meeting date. Any item received later than seven days will not be discussed until the following month's meeting.

INVOLVEMENT IN PARTNERSHIPS – the council aims to have representatives on organisations in the Parish, such as the Village Centre Management Committee and other partnerships/networks as is appropriate. The officers of the council regularly discuss matters which may affect Ashurst Wood Parish with other town and parish councils who have experience of these issues.

The council encourages and supports public meetings organised by the police, the health authority, the district and county councils and other organisations where they feel information should be made available to the residents of Ashurst Wood Parish.

The Council welcomes ideas from organisations or individuals in respect of budgeting for particular projects/services in future years. The budget process commences in October annually. The proposed budget for the forthcoming year is posted on the main notice board and website for public consultation during November/December annually.

ROLE OF COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS – Councillors will aim to assist bringing about well-being outcomes in a number of different settings:

- Informal meetings with constituents
- Neighbourhood Panels
- Meetings with local business people and those working in the voluntary and community sector.

Councillors will hold the council employees to account through scrutiny and take an overview of the council's activities by:

- Requiring an audit trail of evidence about well-being outcomes in decision making.
- Exploring possible well-being outcomes and testing ways of achieving them as part of the policy development process.
- Testing the priorities agreed as part of sustainable community strategies, local area agreements and other key plans, and how they are being achieved.
- In discussions with employees, or at meetings on new initiatives, raise the profile of the Well Being Power.
- By making sure employees understand how the Power supports the role of the local authority in working with others to achieve well-being.
- Employees will be asked to consider how particular initiatives could be supported by the use of the Well Being Power.
- The appointment of a Clerk who is the Responsible Financial Officer and the legal officer to the Council.

Ashurst Wood Parish Council aim to show that it and its employees have the confidence and ambition to move beyond traditional notions of its roles and responsibilities.

SPECIFIC AREAS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT – The council will consult the community on future developments in and around the Parish when appropriate. The council will ensure that Mid Sussex District Council and West Sussex County Council consult the public on any scheme that may affect the Parish. The council will uphold and act, where possible, the findings of the community-led Village Plan.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE – Complaint forms are available from the Clerk. All complaints received will be acknowledged within three working days followed by a further letter advising of the outcome of the complaint.

CONTACT DETAILS – Full contact details of all councillors can be accessed on the parish councils Website <http://www.ashurstwoodparishcouncil.gov.uk>, the notice boards or via the Clerk.

The Clerk can be contacted at clerk@ashurstwoodparishcouncil.gov.uk or telephone 01342 823770. Correspondence should be addressed to:

Susan Wellerd
Clerk to Ashurst Wood Parish Council
St Dunstan’s Church
Hammerwood Road
Ashurst Wood
West Sussex
RH19 3QT

Signed by the Chair and Clerk at the Parish Council Meeting held on 2nd March 2010

J Forbes
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Chairman

S Wellerd
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Parish Clerk

To view a copy of the Power of Well-Being visit www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/localregional/localcommunity/wellbeingpower