

EPPING TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Epping Town Council are very active in positive community engagement and are committed to reaching a wide audience, from all ages and backgrounds.

- Council invite our local school children to sing at events and design the Mayor's Christmas card. When council refurbish playgrounds, they seek the views of local children and parents.
- Council often ask schools to work with them on specific projects and invite them to send in pictures and opinions. They have also specifically asked nursery groups and disabled students from the local college.

AIM: To involve the community and deliver what they need.

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Liaison with teachers. Invitations. Group leaders.

- Epping Town Council produce a quarterly magazine which is available by collection and viewable online. In each issue, everyone is invited to submit their views and ideas. Ideas are also invited through the website and Twitter.
- Residents are invited to make comments to Council and these are put on the Council agenda if requested.

AIM: To provide a platform for residents to share information

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Advertisement in each edition and on website inviting contributions. Meetings are publicly advertised and comments invited.

- The Annual Town Meeting is well advertised in the town on noticeboards, the website and Twitter, where people are invited to get involved. Invitations are also sent out inviting local organisations to come and speak on subjects of their choice.

AIM: To enable residents to express their concerns to councillors and officers.

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Widely advertised, invitations sent out with the Annual Report.

- Epping Town Council invites the views of local teenagers and contacts local youth community centres to actively seek their opinions and invite any input.
- They also visit the local sheltered accommodation residences, as these residents find it more difficult to get out and be involved.
- Council actively work with those bringing ideas and suggestions and encourage them to help drive projects forwards, such as the skate park.

AIM: To reach all groups in the community.

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Invitations to youth centres/community clubs/senior citizens' residences/groups, those requesting things from Council, to really be involved.

- In July 2014, Epping Town Council was designated as a Neighbourhood Planning area and one of the key elements is community engagement and reaching as many people and as diverse groups as possible, so they have been really proactive and creative in engaging people. Through this channel, the community collectively, have a real chance to influence planning policy.

Methods of engagement have included:

AIM: To reach everyone in the community and give them the opportunity to help shape Epping's future.

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Drop in sessions, Surveys, Questionnaires, Website and Twitter, Focus groups, Workshops, Coffee mornings, Posters in shops, pharmacies, doctors' surgeries, dentists, vets, restaurants, pubs and the local hospital; holding engagement sessions in the library, market, local park, High Street cafes, local community centres and sheltered housing; distributing information at Epping Station with details of their website and email address, to remind commuters to join in; going into the local youth community centre, schools and playgroups and inviting them to do projects, drawings and homework exercises, so their ideas form evidence to feed into the Neighbourhood Plan.

Epping Town Council actively involve everyone in the community, ensuring equality and reaching out to traditionally harder to reach groups. Our material is designed to be as engaging as possible.

- Epping Town Council have five playgrounds and before refurbishment of our playgrounds, we consult with our playground users, including neighbouring residents, children and schools. We have requested ideas and illustrations to enable us to deliver what our residents and children really want. We have also recently facilitated partnership working with parents through a CIO to enable us to obtain targeted funding for our playgrounds, so we can deliver more and better equipment. This community partnership enabled us to deliver a £176,000 driven by our residents.

AIM: To provide excellent playgrounds, which deliver what our users want.

METHOD OF ACHEIVEMENT: Close partnership working with parents, schools and residents. Developing a CIO to enable our community to drive the projects, with our support, to an excellent outcome. Listening closely to what residents really want in detail.

- Epping Town Council consult with our residents to determine whether they would enjoy outdoor exercise equipment and other sporting facilities, such as improved tennis courts, at selected locations and respond to those requests.

AIM: To provide our residents with facilities of use.

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Surveys, posters, requests for information in our Town Magazine.

- Epping Town Council have responded to requests from our market traders to support our Monday Charter Market. This involves consultation with traders and our community; working on ideas to improve the market in terms of events and attractions and methods of support for the future.

AIM: To support our current market traders, attract new traders, offer events and attractions and provide the market with a sustainable, long-term future.

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Trader discussions, meetings, surveys, market research, requests for community input, ideas from other successful markets.

- The Town Council play a pivotal role in directing residents to the correct place for their queries and liaising with community partners and other local authorities and organisations to keep that knowledge current.

AIM: To support residents and assist them with their issues and queries.

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Fostering good relations with our community partners and other local authorities and organisations and residents.

This was particularly evident during the coronavirus Covid 19 health pandemic, when Epping Town Council offered their services as a key point of contact and signpost for residents.

Approved: March 2023

Date to be reviewed: Feb 2025

Epping Town Council 2023