

**BRIDPORT TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STATEMENT OF INTENT**

1. Aims and Objectives

The Town Plan states that the aims of the Town Council in the period 2007 to 2010, in partnership with Community Planning initiatives and working together with other local authority and community initiatives, are to promote manageable and appropriate change and regeneration, consistent with the historic character and values of our town.

One of the ways that it seeks to do this is working with community groups and all tiers of local authorities. This includes in particular supporting the Bridport Local Area Partnership, working in partnership with representative groups, improving communication with residents and welcoming participation from the public in its decision making processes.

2. Engaging with the Community

As stated in the Town Plan, the Town Council is an inclusive council and will engage with every part of its community. It seeks to ensure equal opportunities apply to everyone regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion/faith and sexual orientation. The Town Council will engage with individuals and representative groups in Bridport and West Bay and also with business representatives, other agencies, the District Council and the County Council.

3. Provision of Information to the Community

All items which are in the Town Council's Freedom of Information Publication Scheme are available to the public. The Town Council will publish an Annual Report which will be delivered to all households and will also publish a number of newsletters during the year, which shall be available throughout the town. The Annual Report and Newsletters will also be published on the web site. The Annual Report will include a summary of the Town Council's Annual Accounts. Regular Financial monitoring reports and all the Town Council's agendas and minutes are published on the Town Council's website.

The Town Clerk will report to the Annual Town Meeting on the activities of the Town Council over the past year.

The Town Council will attend events during the year, such as the Food Festival and Melplash Show, with information on its activities and services.

4. Opportunities for Community Involvement

The Town Council will seek to work with representative groups to assist in the delivery of projects of benefit to the area.

The Town Council will support community groups to deliver their projects through its grants scheme.

Members of the public are able to speak in the Public Forum at all meetings of the Council, its committees and sub committees.

Surveys may be undertaken in respect of Town Council projects and services.

5. Opportunities for Formal Representations to the Council

The Town Council welcomes representations from individuals, groups or partner organisations.

The Town Council has adopted a formal complaints procedure which specifies time limits for responses and resolving complaints.

The Town Council allows petitions to be presented at the Council meeting, which will then be referred for consideration to the appropriate committee.

Statements may be made or questions asked at meetings of the Council, its committees and sub committees.

6. Involvement in Partnerships

The Town Council supports and appoints representatives to the Bridport Local Area Partnership. It also appoints members to a number of other bodies, including the Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Partners and Community Together etc. It seeks to work in partnership with community groups, business organisations and other agencies to benefit the area and its residents.

7. Role of Council Members and Officers

All members of the Council are available to receive comments on issues from all members of the community. They attend community events and meetings, are appointed to outside bodies and partnerships and bring issues and matters to the attention of the Town Council. The Councillors' contact details are published in the Town Council Newsletters and on the web site.

The Town Council can be contacted from Monday to Friday, 8.30am – 5.00pm (Friday 4.30 pm). The Town Council's office telephone number and email address are widely publicised and members of the community can readily contact an officer of the council.

8. Specific Areas for Community Involvement

The Town Council will consult the community on major projects, such as the Town Hall Heritage and Conservation Project. It will also seek the views of the community on the services it provides with occasional surveys. The Town Council will seek to consult with the public on its revision to the Town Plan. In preparing its Town Plan, it will also have regard to the Bridport Community Plan. It will seek to engage with young people through its annual Democracy Day event and also in helping to provide and plan facilities such as play areas, the skate park etc.