



# Heybridge Parish Council

## Community Inclusion and Engagement Strategy

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### 1. Vision Statement

Heybridge Parish Council is committed to engaging with and empowering its residents and communities so that they can be actively involved in decisions that affect them. To this end, the Parish Council will use the following strategy.

### 2. Making Information Available

Being proactive in making information available on what decisions are being considered and how residents can influence or contribute to the discussion.

- Methods used to ensure this will include the website, noticeboards, Facebook, leaflets, posters, consultations, word of mouth and various reports.
- Being receptive to any reasonable opportunities that support the above, especially assisting those residents difficult to reach e.g. the housebound and disabled.

### 3. Public Opinion

Having all meetings of the Parish Council and its Committees open to the public and with a period set aside for residents to comment.

- Residents can access agendas via the website, Facebook, Parish Office and noticeboards. Facilities also exist where residents can, where appropriate or necessary, make written reports or have a case presented on their behalf to members. Arrangements can be made for those with disabilities such as impaired hearing or a speed impediment.

Being receptive to requests from residents or communities and where thought appropriate ensure their opinions are made known to other organisations.

- This may be by including an item for discussion on an agenda, allowing a local group to put their opinions into an official report undertaken by the parish council or by e.g. meeting youngsters at a local play area.

### 4. Parish Council Office

Ensuring that the Parish Council Office plays a neutral role so that residents can be confident that they are receiving unbiased information and support.

- This neutral involvement allows more flexibility in the service and the personal element of the contact hopefully encourages

more involvement from the hard to reach members of the community.

- Ensuring that, where appropriate, local people and communities are referred to the correct district or county council department/officer/councillor and that they are aware of the ways that they can use the relevant systems to make their views known.
- The office is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 12pm and 12:30pm to 3pm.

#### **5. Heybridge Herald**

Producing and distributing a quarterly newsletter (The Heybridge Herald) for all properties within the parish.

#### **6. Contact Details**

Publicising details of how to contact the Parish Council Office and Councillors on the noticeboards, website and in the Heybridge Herald.

#### **7. Community Events and Involvement**

Using suitable opportunities to have a public presence at community events. Every opportunity to increase this public presence will be welcomed and considered.

- Individual Councillors as well as the Council staff play a role in identifying opportunities and representing the Council.

#### **8. Increase visibility**

Going, where possible, to the community rather than expecting them to travel (sometimes long distances) to meetings.

#### **9. Consultations**

Considering and responding where necessary and appropriate to central and local government consultations and surveys and making the Council's input available to the public.

#### **10. Open and Accountable Local Government legislation**

- i. This includes allowing the use of recording devices at meetings, right of access to information, recording and publishing of officer's decisions etc.
- ii. Being open and accountable in its dealings with residents and the community. Information on its policies and procedures available on the website.

Clerk

31 March 2015

Reviewed April 2016.