

Version	Description of Change	Reviewing Officer	Reviewing Committee	Frequency of Review	Minutes reference adopted	Next Review Date
1.0	Revision	Katherine Hyett - Clerk	Council 29.09.26	Every 3 years	FC/290926/09	29.09.29

Community Engagement Statement of Intent

1. Introduction

Burwell Parish Council recognises that effective local government depends upon meaningful engagement with the community it serves. This Statement of Intent sets out how the Council will communicate with residents, businesses, community organisations and other stakeholders, and how it will encourage participation in local decision-making.

The Council is committed to ensuring that community engagement is open, accessible, inclusive and responsive. The purpose of this document is to provide a framework for engagement activities, demonstrate the Council's commitment to transparency and good governance, and ensure that residents have meaningful opportunities to help shape local services and priorities.

2. Legislative and Governance Context

This Statement supports the Council's responsibilities under:

- Local Government Act 1972, including requirements relating to public access to meetings and publication of meeting notices.
- Localism Act 2011 and the principles of community empowerment and local accountability.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR in relation to consultation responses and personal data.
- National Planning Policy Framework principles regarding community consultation and involvement.
- The Local Government Transparency Code 2015.
- National Association of Local Councils (NALC) guidance on community engagement and good governance.

This document serves as evidence of the Council's commitment to community involvement and may be used to support audits, governance reviews, accreditation schemes and demonstrations of best practice.

3. Our Aims

Burwell Parish Council aims to:

- Work collaboratively with residents, businesses, community groups and partner organisations.
 - Encourage participation from as wide a range of people as possible, recognising that individuals engage in different ways.
 - Promote informed decision-making by actively seeking and considering community views.
 - Ensure residents have opportunities to contribute to discussions before decisions are taken.
 - Remove barriers to participation wherever possible.
 - Continually review and develop engagement methods to reflect changing technology, demographics and community expectations.
 - Foster a culture of listening, respect and constructive dialogue between the Council and the community.
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4. Our Objectives

The Council seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

- Improved communication between the Council and the community.
 - Greater public awareness of the role and responsibilities of parish councillors.
 - Increased participation in consultations, public meetings, working groups and community initiatives.
 - Better understanding of local needs and priorities.
 - Improved satisfaction with Council services and facilities.
 - Stronger partnerships with local organisations and community groups.
 - Clear feedback to residents demonstrating how community views have influenced decisions.
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5. Understanding Our Community

Burwell is one of the largest villages in Cambridgeshire, situated on the edge of the Fens, with a population of over 7,000 residents.

The Council recognises that the community includes:

- Residents of all ages.
- Young people and school communities.
- Local businesses and employers.
- Community, voluntary and charitable organisations.
- Sports clubs and recreational groups.
- Faith organisations.
- The farming community.
- Users of Parish Council facilities and services.
- New residents.
- Individuals and groups with protected characteristics.
- Partner authorities and public service providers.

To ensure community information remains current, demographic information should be considered alongside publicly available census and local profile data when planning engagement activities.

6. The Role of Councillors and Officers

Councillors play a vital role as two-way conduits between the Council and the community. They are expected to:

- Listen to residents and community groups.
- Represent community concerns and aspirations.
- Explain Council decisions and policies.
- Promote opportunities for participation.
- Encourage respectful and constructive dialogue.

The Council also encourages greater participation by councillors in specific areas of interest through committees, working groups and forums.

Council officers provide continuity, professionalism and accessibility. They support engagement by:

- Responding to enquiries.
- Providing information and advice.
- Managing consultations.
- Supporting community initiatives.
- Maintaining communication channels.

The Council's staff, including maintenance and facilities employees, often have direct contact with residents and are important ambassadors for the Council. Their conduct and interactions contribute significantly to public perceptions of the organisation.

The Council offices are located at the Jubilee Reading Room, 99 The Causeway, Burwell, CB25 0DU and are currently open Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 12.00 noon, except during periods of staff leave. Alternatively council officers can be contacted by email, phone or via the website.

7. How We Engage with the Community

The Council recognises that no single method will reach all residents and therefore seeks to use a range of engagement approaches.

Formal Engagement

- Public participation sessions at Full Council meetings.
- Posting of agendas on notice boards and the parish council website.
- Publishing minutes of all full council meetings,
- Annual Parish Meetings and an annual report (published online and in Clunch)
- Public consultations on significant projects, policies and developments.
- Surveys and questionnaires.

- Planning consultations where appropriate.
- Provision of a newsletter in 'Clunch', the bi-monthly village magazine.

Digital Engagement

The Council increasingly uses digital communications to improve accessibility and reach.

These include:

- The Parish Council website, which provides access to agendas, minutes, policies, financial information, news, contact details and Council services.
- Social media platforms to share information, consultations, community updates and engagement opportunities.
- Email communications and electronic consultation responses.
- Online surveys where appropriate.

Digital engagement enables residents to participate at a time and place convenient to them and provides opportunities for those unable to attend meetings in person.

Community Engagement

The Council and its employees will continue to engage through:

- Attendance at village events.
- Community information stands.
- Working groups and forums.
- Meetings with local organisations.
- Informal discussions with residents.
- Welcome information for new residents.

Particular emphasis will be placed on engaging with those who may not traditionally participate in council meetings or consultations.

8. Climate Change, Biodiversity and Community Forums

Burwell Parish Council recognises the importance of collaborative working on environmental issues.

The Climate Change, Biodiversity and Pollution Forum provides opportunities for residents, specialists, interest groups and community organisations to contribute expertise and recommendations for consideration by the Parish Council¹.

These forums strengthen community involvement by bringing together diverse perspectives and encouraging collaborative problem-solving.

¹ Current Partners are Wild Burwell, Spring Close & Priory Meadow Management Group, Wicken Fen and Burwell Energy Awareness Team (BEAT) – September 2026

9. Accessibility and Inclusion

The Council is committed to ensuring engagement opportunities are available to all sections of the community.

To support inclusion, the Council will seek to:

- Use a variety of communication methods.
- Provide online and offline opportunities to participate.
- Consider alternative formats where required.
- Engage with younger residents and harder-to-reach groups.
- Work with community organisations to reach under-represented sectors of the community.
- Ensure consultations are proportionate, accessible and easy to understand.

The Council recognises that influence should not be limited to those who regularly attend meetings and will continue developing methods that encourage wider participation.

10. Feedback and Accountability

Effective engagement requires both listening and responding.

Where appropriate, the Council will:

- Publish consultation outcomes.
- Explain how views have informed decisions.
- Report back on engagement exercises.
- Review participation levels and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Consider lessons learned from previous consultations when planning future engagement.

By providing clear feedback, the Council aims to strengthen public confidence and demonstrate that engagement activities have purpose and value.

11. Working with Partners

The Council works closely with community groups, voluntary organisations, statutory bodies and local initiatives. Representation on partner organisations enables the Council to better understand community needs and ensures specialist groups have opportunities to contribute to local decision-making.

Partnership arrangements will be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain relevant and effective.

12. Review

This Statement shall be reviewed every three years or sooner if required by legislative, organisational or operational changes.