

Debenham Parish Council Community Engagement Policy

Our community has a central role to play in influencing and shaping what happens in Debenham. In our corporate plan, we recognise that our role as a local authority is continuously evolving, and we've committed to helping people to do more for themselves, for each other and for their community.

Community engagement is a planned two-way process by which specific, identified groups of the community are given the opportunity to provide input that enhances decision making processes on issues that may impact on their well-being or interests.

The Parish Council aims to reflect the needs of its residents and the local community, and the services it provides should work towards achieving this aim.

In order to facilitate this two-way Community Engagement, the Parish Council will:

- Provide parishioners with relevant information about any matters relevant to them and their area, including services, policies, considerations and decisions that might affect or interest them
- Provide parishioners with opportunities to have their say through consultations, surveys and debate
- Provide parishioners with opportunities to get involved and take part in activities and projects
- Ensure views are listened to and used to develop, enhance and improve delivery where possible and practical

The Debenham Parish Council will aim to be as open and transparent as possible, providing the local community with as much information through as many different routes as possible. Our Engagement with our Community will be carried out in the following ways:

- a) Regular articles on the Parish Magazine distributed throughout the parish.
- b) Online via our website debenham.onesuffolk.net which is regularly updated with information relating to the parish. All agendas, minutes, financial information and Parish Council news are also available via the website.
- c) Social Media via use of a local group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/677931589050346/> (membership needed).
- d) Meetings of the Parish Council and its Committees, which are open to members of the public and allow for public participation at specific times.
- e) Regular Parish Surgeries held at Dove cottage, in the heart of the village, during "Coffee Mornings".
- f) Distribution of leaflets/letters as and when necessary and when full parish engagement is required.

- g) One to one contact with Councillors, who are an important source of two-way communication between the Council and residents.
- h) Notice Board- the Parish Council has a notice board on Market Green which may be used not just for Council news but also for community information. The board is regularly updated and the community is encouraged to pass information to the Parish Council for inclusion.
- i) Traditional contact may also be made by letter, e-mail and telephone via the Parish Clerk: Mr Brian Mansfield, Debenham Parish Council, c/o Dove Cottage, 39 High Street, Debenham, Suffolk IP14 6QN; parish.clerk@debenhamparishcouncil.org or Tel. 07895 583798

When Community Engagement is strong, the following things happen:

- Residents understand and trust the work of the Council
- Residents play a part in decision making
- The relationship between the Council and residents is mutual; instead of residents being passive recipients
- Community members and groups are involved in work to support their area
- Higher numbers of people get interested in the change we need to make and are willing to help us shape that change
- Innovation and change take place through community action

The Debenham Neighbourhood Plan, which is also the largest Community Engagement exercise carried out so far, was approved in 2019. This document is currently under review.

Reviewed on: 14th April 2025

Next review due: March 2026