



Statement of intent as to community engagement

Horsforth Town Council is committed to high standards of engagement with its community. Our Council is the first tier of local government which is closest to the community it serves. Councillors play an important role as they are elected to make decisions on matters affecting the town. We aim to make a measurable difference to the quality of life of the community we serve and to be responsive to the needs of our community. This statement sets out how we ensure the community is kept informed and enables the community to contribute to activities and decision making of this council to the benefit of the town.

1. Aims and Objectives

Horsforth Town Council aims to:

- Represent and promote the interests of Horsforth and all its people in all forums
- Pay particular attention to the needs of children and young people and other vulnerable members of the community and those hard to reach groups
- Provide the best possible amenities and services by the efficient use of available resources
- Actively involve local people in decisions affecting activities in the area
- Promote equality of opportunity and oppose discrimination
- Be open and accountable in all it does
- Support development which is environmentally, socially and economically sound and sustainable
- Enhance quality of life by protecting and enhancing Horsforth's ecological and environmental assets

To achieve these aims, the Council will:

- Work closely with residents, businesses and community groups
- Engage with as many people as possible who want to participate in decision making, monitoring services and planning for the future
- Ensure that through the use of a wide range of approaches to public involvement and community engagement, we actively encourage the involvement of residents, to capture their views and learn their concerns and effectively use those views as an integral part of the council's decision making process
- Ensure that residents have the opportunities to be heard at every stage, and given the capacity to be effective citizens

The outcomes the Council hopes to achieve are:

- Improved communications with the local community
- A better understanding within the community of the role of the Town Council and of its councillors
- Local people actively contributing to decision making
- Improved satisfaction with local public services

2. Defining the community:

The Council considers the community of Horsforth to consist of:

- All residents of the town
- All those who work in the town
- All those who own businesses in the town
- All young people who live and/or go to school within the town
- All local voluntary organisations, clubs and societies
- Any group or organisation that represents some or any of the members of the above sections of the community

Additionally, the Council recognises that there are certain bodies that are crucial to the quality of life in Horsforth and aims to maintain excellent working relationships with these bodies, including the Police, other tiers of local government and neighbouring town and parish councils.

3. Provision of information to the community and opportunities for community involvement

Information is provided by the Town Council to the community in a number of ways, including:

- The Town Council office in The Stables, 2 Church Road is generally open Tuesday to Thursday 9.30am to 2.30pm and can provide a wide range of information on Horsforth activities and issues.
- The Council's website provides information which includes agenda and minutes, contact details of all councillors, local activities and events and a list of groups and organisations in the town. Members of the public can contact the Town Council through the website.
- The Town Council provides a notice board outside the library on Town Street which is used to display Council meeting notices and all other statutory notices. A section of this notice board is designated for community groups advertising their events in the town.
- The Town Council's newsletter is published 3-4 times a year and delivered to every household in the town. The newsletter is also published on the Council website and copies left in the town library for the public.
- The Annual Report is published every year by 30th June and is available on the Council website or can be collected from the Council office or the library on Town Street.
- All members of the public are welcomed and encouraged to attend any Town Council meeting and dates of all meetings are publicised through Noticeboards, Website or direct from the Town Clerk's office
- The public are able to speak directly to members at Town Council and Committee meetings. a period is set aside for public questions relating to items on the agenda.
- Residents are able to attend and take a part in the Annual Town Meeting.
- Public meetings can be called to gauge public opinion about important issues affecting the town.
- Questionnaires are at times used to ask local residents opinions about specific matters and these are distributed to local residents, for example with the newsletter sent directly to each home by post, via the library and at meetings, or delivered by the 22 councillors who represent the community.
- Horsforth Town Council provides a Facebook page which will be used to promote the work of the Council.
- Councillor Surgeries are held before every Full Council meeting.
- The Town Council has a stall at the Farmers market every other month.
- The Town Council has a stall at The Gala every year.

- Planning applications are considered at Planning, Licensing and Traffic Committee meetings which are held monthly. The opportunities for people to speak applies equally to these agenda items. Equal opportunity is given to applicants/supporters, objectors and local community groups.
- The Town Council will be open and accountable in its dealing with residents and the community. It will make information on its policies and procedures freely available.
- Holding a wide range of community events which provide opportunities to engage with the public and raise community spirit

4. Opportunities for Formal Representations to the Council

- Formal representations to the Council may be made at any time in writing to the Town Clerk.
- A period for representation is set aside at the beginning of each Council and Committee meeting.

5. Involvement in Partnerships

Horsforth Town Council seeks to work with other organisations and groups both within and outside the parish, together with individuals from the community, voluntary and private sectors to ensure that engagement activities influence the future direction of the Town.

The Council also recognises that it needs to work with local and visiting communities to encourage effective community engagement and ensure that processes are flexible and can be tailored to different groups and individuals in different area of the Town. The Council understands that sometimes people are reluctant to get involved and we will work with other partners to ensure that community engagement is as straightforward as possible and targeted appropriately.

The Town Council works in partnership with other organisations such as Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Police. It also has representatives on the following local organisations:

- Leeds branch of the Yorkshire Local Council Association
- Leeds Bradford International Airport Joint Committee
- Horsforth Fairtrade
- Horsforth Climate Action
- Young Peoples Champion
- MHA Communities
- Dementia Friendly

6. Council Members

Council Members (Councillors) are the elected decision makers of the Town Council. Councillors represent the community and bring community issues to the Full Council for a corporate decision to be made. Their contact details are available from the Town Council office, on all newsletters and the Town Council website. Members of the public are welcome to contact Councillors to raise any issues.

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