

RYE TOWN COUNCIL

**STATEMENT OF INTENT:
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

1 The community

For the purpose of this Statement the terms 'the community' and 'community members' include:

- Those residing and working within the Parish of Rye
- Businesses based within the Parish, including their representative bodies
- Users of Town Council services
- 'Temporary' members of the community – particularly visitors
- Community and interest groups
- Voluntary and not-for-profit organisations
- Church and faith groups
- Educational establishments and providers
- Those providing other public or quasi public services within the Parish

2 Aims

Rye Town Council seeks to:

- Work more closely with community members
- Engage with as many people as practicable who wish to participate in community decision-making – particularly in relation to the provision of services and facilities, both now and in the future
- Ensure that, through a variety of community engagement techniques, the Council actively encourages the involvement of community members in order to ascertain their views and concerns - thereby informing the Council's decision-making

3 Objectives

This Statement of Intent forms part of the Council's strategy of creating, maintaining and developing effective working relationships with all sectors of the community based on trust, openness and constructive challenge.

Outcomes of this strategy should include:

- Enhanced communication through the introduction of suitable channels of engagement where they did not already exist
- Greater awareness amongst community members of the role of the Council

- Improved interaction with community members, with more people feeling that they are involved in decisions affecting the community
- Improved satisfaction with public services

4 Provision of information and opportunities for community involvement

- The Council's office, based at the Town Hall (Market Street, Rye TN31 7LA), is open to the public Monday-Thursday, 9am-1pm – and at other times by appointment
- The Council's web site www.ryetowncouncil.gov.uk contains a wide range of information about the Council and its work – including agendas and minutes, news, policies, publications and planning applications. Its sister web site www.ryeheritage.co.uk provides information about the Council's principal operation: Rye Heritage Education and Information Centre
- The Council may be contacted by: telephone on 01797 223902 (out of hours answermachine), fax on 01797 227706 or email at townhall@ryetowncouncil.gov.uk.
- The Council publishes an Annual Report which summaries its activities over the preceding year and its accounts. It is distributed to every household in the Parish and left at key locations within the town
- Within *Rye Fixtures* the Council publishes a quarterly 'newsletter'
- Town Councillors' contact details appear within the Annual Report and 'newsletter', on the Council web site and on the Town Hall noticeboard
- Councillor surgeries are held at the Town Hall, usually on the first Wednesday of the month, from 6.30pm (appointment only)
- Members of the public are encouraged to attend the Council's meetings, which commence (usually fortnightly) at 6.30pm on a Monday evening. At meetings of the full Council and the Planning & Townscape Committee meetings there is an adjournment to allow members of the public to express concerns and ask questions
- The majority of the members of the Council's Public Services [advisory] Committee are members of the public or representatives of local community/interest groups. The Committee welcomes expressions of interest from prospective co-optees with relevant specialist knowledge.

5 Opportunities for formal representation

- The Council welcomes presentations from local groups on matters of concern/interest at meetings of the Council. Unless the presentation is for information only, normally Councillors will

consider the matter presented at the same meeting. In the first instance the Clerk should be contacted to discuss arrangements.

- Properly constructed petitions may be presented to the Mayor at the commencement of meetings of the full Council

6 Partnership working

The Council welcomes invitations to appoint representatives to the managing/advisory bodies of local groups and organisations. A schedule of the bodies upon which the Council is represented currently is available on request or may be found at: www.ryetowncouncil.gov.uk/whatwedocommunityinvolvement.aspx

7 Specific areas for community involvement

- As the initiator of the *Rye Local Action Plan 2009-14* (published September 2009) the Council will seek to encourage the stakeholders identified within the Plan to work together to realise the 'actions' – but will also encourage members of the community to volunteer to help drive forward any actions of interest to them
- The Council will consult on the facilities to be provided within the new community facility proposed for Tilling Green and will seek to ensure that members of the community are provided with regular opportunities to help shape the Local Development Framework

09/09 [2]