



# Newhaven Town Council

## Statement of intent as to community engagement

### 1. Aims and Objectives

#### **Newhaven Town Council aims to:-**

- ◆ Represent and promote the interests of Newhaven and all its people in all forums
- ◆ Pay particular attention to the needs of our children and young people
- ◆ 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 Newhaven's ecological and environmental assets

#### **In order 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 decision-making process;
- ◆ ensure that residents have the opportunities to be heard at every stage, and the capacity to be effective citizens.

#### **The outcomes the Council hopes to achieve are:**

- ◆ Improved communication 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 Newhaven to consist of:

- ◆ All residents of the town
- ◆ All users of the Town Council's services

- ◆ All those who work within the town
- ◆ All those who own businesses within 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 Newhaven and aims to maintain excellent working relationships with these bodies, including the Police, the 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 offices in Fort Road are open Monday to Friday and can provide a wide range of information both on Council services and other Newhaven activities and issues
- ◆ The Town Council's website [www.newhaventowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.newhaventowncouncil.gov.uk) provides comprehensive information both on the work of the Town Council and on other services, the history of the town, local events, local groups and organisations. The public can contact the Town Council through the website and public consultations are sometimes carried out through the website.
- ◆ The Town Council provides nine noticeboards around the town which are used to display agendas for Council meetings and contact details for local councillors as well as other information of interest to the local community. Additionally, the Council has provided a town centre community noticeboard which can be used by local events organisers or groups.
- ◆ Town councillors' surgeries are held at least 6 times a year at a variety of locations where people gather.
- ◆ The Town Council's Newsletter is published approximately quarterly and is available from the Town Council offices, on the website and from the local library
- ◆ The Annual Report is produced in April each year and is available from the Town Council offices, on the website and from the local library and also presented at the annual Town Meeting.
- ◆ All meetings of the Town Council and its committees and sub-committees are open to the public and a period is set aside at the beginning of each meeting for public questions relating to items on the agenda. Public questions may also be asked on matters which are not on the agenda, provided that notice has been given to the Clerk at least three working days before the date of the meeting.
- ◆ Public meetings are called to gauge public opinion about important issues affecting the town such as major planning applications
- ◆ Questionnaires are sometimes used to ask local people's opinions about specific matters and these are distributed to local residents, for example through stands at supermarkets or at public meetings, or downloadable from the Council website
- ◆ Social media sites

#### **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 the receipt of petitions is set aside at the beginning of each Council meeting.

#### **5. Involvement in Partnerships**

The Town Council often works in partnership with other organisations such as the District Council, the Newhaven Community Development Association or the Police. It is represented on the Newhaven Strategic Network and also has representatives on the following local organisations:

- ◆ Access in Seaford and Newhaven Committee
- ◆ Age Concern Day Club
- ◆ Community Transport for the Lewes Area (CTLA)
- ◆ District Association of Local & Parish Councils
- ◆ INPAC
- ◆ Lewes District Foyer
- ◆ Local Partnership for Children
- ◆ Meridian Mature Citizens Forum
- ◆ Newhaven in Bloom
- ◆ Newhaven Strategic Network
- ◆ Open Spaces Group
- ◆ Parishes of the Lower Ouse (POLO)
- ◆ Tourism & Culture Action Group
- ◆ Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee

#### **6. Role of Council Members and Officers**

Council Members (Councillors) are the elected decision makers of the Town Council. Their contact details are available from the Town Council offices, on Town Council noticeboards and on the Town Council website. Members of the public are welcome to contact Councillors to raise any issues.

The Council's officers are staff who are employed to carry out the day to day functions of the Council and make sure that its services are provided for the local community. The Town Clerk is the Proper Officer for the Council which means he has overall responsibility for the provision of Council services.

**Statement adopted by Newhaven Town Council at its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2011**