



A Short Guide
to Community
Engagement

**Street Lighting Workshop
and Exhibition**

Raunds

4 March 2019

A Short Guide to Community Engagement

- What is Community Engagement?
- What is its purpose?
- Practical Community Engagement
- Good Practice
- Risks & Dangers
- Response Rate
- How to Encourage Involvement
- Summary

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- What is Community Engagement?
 - A dialogue between the council and the residents of the parish
 - But can (and should) involve other “stakeholders”
 - A way of involving residents in decision making
 - A process for reaching beyond the knowledge and experience of councillors to harness the collective power of the community

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- What is its purpose?
 - Gain and demonstrate community support
 - Identify and address issues and challenges
 - Provide evidence to help decide on options (qualitative, quantitative)
 - Access funding
 - Develop a sense of community ownership (and pride)

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- Practical Community Engagement
 - Council meetings (public participation session)
 - Public meetings (Annual Parish Meeting, drop-ins, open days)
 - Formal consultation (surveys and questionnaires (hard copy and online))
 - Every e-mail, social media post, telephone call and even conversations in the pub!

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- Good Practice

- Agree and communicate a clear purpose and scope

- What do you want to know, what are you asking, what needs doing?

- How do you want people to be involved?

- Who are you asking? Why them?

- What barriers might there be to people participating?

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- Good Practice
 - Choose engagement method(s) according to purpose and scope
 - Engagement methods can include: community mapping, Planning for Real, public meetings, workshops & focus groups, forums, web-based engagement/social media, street stalls, community surveys
 - Think about how you can use existing networks and events
 - Use a variety of methodologies – be creative and make it fun!

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- Good Practice

- Always feedback on what happened – “You said, we did”
 - How and when will feedback be provided?
 - How and when will decisions be taken?
 - Further opportunities for engagement
 - Involvement at the implementation stage

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- Risks & Dangers
 - Must be well organised and respect others' time
 - Must be meaningful
 - Must be fair and inclusive
 - You won't always hear what you want to hear
 - People may not agree with you (or each other)
 - Loudest voice may dominate
 - Hidden agendas
 - Can't please all the people, all the time
 - Honesty is the best policy – but be respectful

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- Response Rate
 - Depends on relevance (Citizens on Standby)
 - Normally very high
 - Parish Plans – 75 – 100%
 - Neighbourhood Plan referendums – 50 – 60%
 - Projects – 5 – 20%
 - Opportunity to respond is as important as response rate

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- Encouraging Involvement
 - History of consultation and engagement – that actually made a difference
 - Good experience in the past
 - Reputation for listening
 - Genuinely value input
 - Fun and enjoyable, short and sweet
 - Good corporate and personal relationship
 - Moral leadership – open and inclusive

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- Summary
 - Meaningful dialogue
 - Helps evidence-based decision making
 - Continual process
 - Fair, open and inclusive
 - You said, we did
 - The power of shared ownership and pride



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