

# SETTING UP AN ENGAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

Paper for Charlbury Town Council meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022

## For Decision

1. The town council's strategy involves the setting up of a number of working groups to conduct the business of various workstreams. All of these – bar the Engagement Working Group - is now up and running. This paper sets out a proposal for how the Engagement WG could operate.
2. For clarity, three definitions:
  - 'Communication' is generally the passing of messages, and often remains a one-way broadcast, even when attempts are made for two-way communication
  - 'Engagement' is effective when people take ownership of a message, task or outcome whereby action may follow
  - Community engagement is a purposeful process which develops a working relationship between communities, community organisations and public and private bodies to help them to identify and act on community needs and ambitions
3. The latter definition is from the Scottish government's [The National Standards for Community Engagement](#) document, attached at Appendix A. This provides a very useful overview of how to engage in high quality engagement processes.
4. Gareth, Liz and Lisa held a meeting with Kat Pringle, a member of the community that has previously offered assistance with the engagement piece. Kat welcomed the standards document and offered very useful advice as to how the town council could approach engagement with the community. In summary, this involves:
  - identifying the different audiences that we wish to reach on different topics
  - crafting messages and means of communication appropriate to those audiences
  - providing acts of agency that those audiences can take as a result of taking ownership of the message.
5. Her core proposal for making this happen is that there be a monthly meeting (probably on-line) with one representative from each of the working groups. Kat is happy to be involved in this group. Each group will be asked if they are taking actions in which they would like to engage the community, the group will discuss the process and content of the engagement exercise, and agree who will take action. Some months there may be no action, other months one or two. Deciding these in a group meeting will help to ensure that the engagement actions are complementary rather than competing, and that there will be learning for everyone from the joint exercises.
6. The engagement actions may be undertaken by the clerk or members of the group individually or together. The Comms team may be asked for assistance. We may need more active management of the council website.
7. Street Fair is only weeks away so we agreed to test this method of working by inviting representatives of each of the WGs to attend a meeting on Tuesday evening to agree the council's strategy for Street Fair. The proposed strategy is proposed in a separate paper.

## Recommendation

8. Councillors are asked to discuss and approve the proposal to proceed in this manner.

LR

22/07/22