



Community Engagement Policy

New Policy required for compliance with the Local Council Award Scheme criteria

Date of adoption	Full Council 3 rd June 2026, Minute number 26/07()
Reviewed	
Next Review Date	Annually or as required
Review By	Policy & Resources Committee

Community Engagement Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out Newton Abbot Town Council's approach to community engagement. It provides a framework for how the Council will involve, inform, and collaborate with residents, local organisations, and stakeholders to support a thriving, inclusive, and connected community.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Town Council services and activities
- The Community Engagement Officer role
- The Council Committees, Sub-Committee and Working Groups
- Newton Abbot Museum and its community-facing activities
- Council communications, including the Town Council website and social media

3. Principles of Engagement

Newton Abbot Town Council is committed to the following principles:

3.1 Inclusivity

Engagement activities will be accessible to all members of the community, regardless of age, background, ability, or circumstance.

3.2 Transparency

The Council will communicate clearly about decisions, processes, and opportunities for involvement.

3.3 Collaboration

The Council will work in partnership with local organisations, community groups, and residents to co-design and deliver initiatives.

3.4 Responsiveness

Feedback from the community will be actively considered and used to inform Council decisions and services.

3.5 Accessibility

Information and activities will be provided in formats that are easy to access and understand.

4. Community Engagement Structure

4.1 Community Engagement Officer

The Council employs a freelance Community Engagement Officer who:

- Reports to the Community & Heritage Committee
- Delivers a programme of free community activities
- Builds relationships with local groups and organisations
- Supports initiatives that enhance community wellbeing and participation

Further information about activities is made available via the Council's website and social media.

4.2 Community Engagement Group

- Meets four times per year
- Receives presentations from local community organisations
- Identifies needs and opportunities within the community
- Recommends appropriate ways the Council can support local groups

The Group operates in accordance with its agreed Terms of Reference.

5. Engagement Methods

The Council uses a range of methods to engage with the community, including:

- Free community activities and events
- Public meetings and presentations including the Meet Your Council events
- Partnerships with local organisations
- Digital engagement via the Town Council website and social media
- Informal outreach and relationship-building

6. Newton Abbot Museum

Newton Abbot Museum plays a key role in community engagement by:

- Sharing the stories and heritage of the town
- Providing accessible, interactive displays and exhibitions
- Delivering free community activities
- Working with local residents to shape content and interpretation

The Museum's mission is to:

Be an accessible centre for learning, to excite curiosity and to promote understanding and appreciation of the cultural heritage of the town.

7. Communication

The Council employs a freelance Communications Advisor who:

- Attends Council meetings and produces press releases and media to share the work of the Council with the wider population
- Attends and supports Council community events
- Raises awareness and the profile of the Council to encourage participation in local democracy, including promoting opportunities to become a Councillor
- Provides professional media support and guidance to the Council

Additional communication channels include:

- The Cryer Newsletter is delivered to Newton Abbot residents, three times a year
- The Cryer Express Newsletter published monthly
- Museum monthly digital newsletter
- Social media
- Local partnerships

The Town Council website serves as a primary platform for:

- Promoting activities and events
- Sharing information about services and initiatives
- Providing updates on community engagement opportunities
- Reporting on the decisions of the Council

8. Supporting Community Organisations

The Council supports local organisations by:

- Providing opportunities to present to the Community Engagement Group
- Identifying appropriate forms of support (e.g., collaboration, promotion, facilitation)
- Encouraging partnership working

9. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be:

- Reviewed periodically by the Community & Heritage Committee
- Informed by feedback from the Community Engagement Group and community stakeholders
- Updated as required to reflect evolving community needs and best practice