

Consulting, campaigning and representing your community



Consulting – asking people in your local area what they think



Community Councils need to do all they can to communicate with all the residents living in the community:

- to seek their views
- to let them know about the work of the Community Council



Here are some examples of what you can do:

- keep in touch with the Community Council Liaison Officer (CCLO) in your local council
- have your main contact details in all communication from your Community Council



Always encourage people to contact you and tell you what they think.



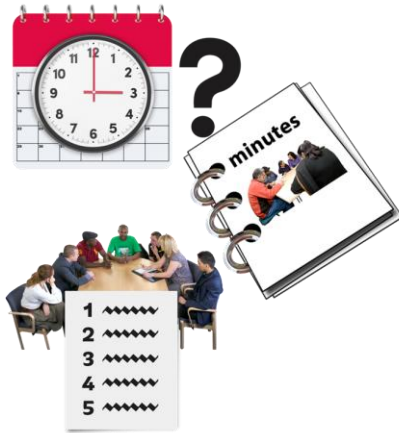
- make it as easy as possible for people to get in touch with you in different ways like:

- email
- phone
- a suggestion box in the community





- have your own website or make sure your details are on the local council website



List contact details for all Community Councillors, including pictures where possible.

Show the date, time and venue of meetings, and the agenda.

Include the minutes of all previous meetings.



- use social media to tell people about the work of the Community Council and to give information about future meetings

You can use the [#FollowMe](#) social media guide for Community Councils to help you decide which channel is best for you.



- make a database of e-mail addresses for people in your area that support your work

Ask for permission to send them e-mail bulletins asking for their views and telling them about your work.



- display Community Council contact details in all public buildings

Include information on what you do and how you can help.



- have articles in local newsletters, including local council publications

You can do this together with all the Community Councils in your area.



- invite and encourage the local papers to come to meetings

Send out press releases about things that will interest local people.

Think about having a person to work on your social media and dealing with the local papers.



- when you have a change of **office bearers** or have a Community Council election:
 - let the local press know
 - contact any local organisations you have worked with

An **office bearer** is a person with a specific duty or job in a group, like a Secretary, or Chairperson.



- have meetings for the community in public places like community buildings, local supermarkets or libraries

These meetings are sometimes called 'surgeries' and they are not formal meetings.



Advertise them in the local press and online well before the date of the meeting and again closer to the time.



Try out different times, days and places to have meetings.

Always have at least 2 Community Councillors there.



- have surveys at least once a year

Ask questions about what the community thinks about you, about their community and about their quality of life.



Ask what you can do to make the community better and what are the most important things for you to deal with.

Surveys can be sent out by email, social media and your website, as well as having printed versions in libraries or community centres in your area.



The answers will help you to show how you speak for the community.

- have public meetings when there are important local **issues**



An **issue** is a subject or problem that people are thinking and talking about.

Check if there is a good mix of people at the meeting so that they represent the community.

- put suggestion boxes in busy local venues, as well as inviting online suggestions via email, social media and the website.



Always reply to comments left when the person gives their contact details.

Regularly report comments at Community Council meetings.

- if possible, deliver flyers or leaflets door to door



This is also an excellent way for Community Councillors to get to know their constituents, and for local people to get to know you.



Think about using a local community radio station to tell people about the work of the Community Council.



- make sure information is easy to understand and does not include jargon - special words or expressions used by a group, that are difficult for others to understand



The Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) has resources to help with community engagement, including the National Standards for Community Engagement.

Remember:



- make it easy for the public to contact you
- get comments and opinions from the community



- check if your work is going well
- always represent the community, not your own views



- always follow the Community Councillors Code of Conduct

Campaigning on issues



How does a Community Council decide which issues it will deal with?

- give most of your attention to issues that affect the most people and issues that you can do something about



- get information

Find out the most important points and then find out what local people feel about it.



- your Community Council's position must represent the views of most of the people in your local area

The Community Council can make sure local people get good information to support them to make decisions.



- decide what results you want and what work you will do to achieve them

Decide why the results will be a good thing for the community.

- check how well your work is going



- an issue can have more than 2 different sides

Can your Community Council bring people with different opinions together?

- one issue should not take over your meetings



- any Community Council campaign must be something that is supported by most people in the local area



- if you have any private or personal interest in an issue that the Community Council is looking at, you have a duty to tell them.

You must not take part in discussions about the issue and how decisions about it are made.



- you can start a special committee to work on a particular issue

The committee must have clear instructions on what it can do.

Representing your community



Communities want to see how their views are being reflected in the decisions made on their behalf by Community Councils.

This can be done in different ways including:

- **Minutes of Community Council meetings**



Minutes should be a note of:

- what happened at a meeting
- what decisions were made
- how the community have been listened to and their views represented



- **Community Council meetings**

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is also a good way to tell people about the work that the Community Council has done in the last year.

- **public meetings**

These can help to show the community:

- that they are being listened to
- that work is being done on the things they are worried about





- **going to other meetings and representing your community**

Your issues and opinions should be reported back to the community through the minutes.



- **newsletters, public notices, websites and social media**

These are good ways to share information, get local views and show how local views have affected the work of the Community Council.



- **membership**

Encourage membership from across all parts of your Community Council area so your council reflects the community it represents.

- **communication channels**

A Community Council should:

- keep local people informed about:
 - events and work that is being done
 - issues affecting the community
- contact the main public and voluntary organisations in the area





- **consultation**

All ways to ask people what they think should be accessible and available as widely as possible.



Members of the public must be able to let the Community Council know what things they would like to be discussed and say what they think.



Community Councillors should not have a campaign about an issue unless it is supported by the local community.