



**MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL**

# **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

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Next review due:	March 2027

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**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

**Aims and Objectives**

The aims and objectives of this strategy are to:

- Encourage effective local community engagement.
- Ensure that throughout Malvern Town Council (hereafter known as ‘the Council’) there is a clear understanding of the need to engage with communities about decisions that affect them.
- Ensure that the feedback/comments/suggestions obtained from community engagement can have an impact on decision-making and the way in which services are being delivered.
- Identify how the Council can enhance its profile by improving engagement with the wider community.

The Town Council will deliver its aims and objectives through:

- Two-way communication with residents.
- Actively encouraging and supporting community involvement.
- Partnership working.
- Trained and competent employees and engaged Town Councillors.

**The community and its facilities**

The Town of Malvern is a spa town lying at the foot of the Malvern Hills in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), with a population of approximately 31,000. The town has three main centres – Great Malvern, Barnards Green and Malvern Link – and has nine Town Council electoral wards.

Malvern Town Council is responsible for the following facilities:

- Great Malvern Cemetery
- Rosebank Gardens
- Two allotments sites
- Eleven play areas
- Four football pitches
- Two sports pavilions
- A skateboard park
- Basketball courts
- Netball/tennis courts
- Multi-use games areas
- Twenty gas lamps
- Litter bins
- Bus shelters
- Four clocks
- A number of other green and open spaces throughout the town
- A bowling club, cricket club, leased by local organisations

The community of Malvern comprises:

- All those living in, working in and visiting the Town or using its facilities

- Businesses and employers in the Town
- A number of tiers of local government
- Voluntary organisations and community groups working for the benefit of the community

### **Provision of information to the community**

Malvern Town Council provides information to the community in the following ways:

- The Town Council website [www.malverntowncouncil.org](http://www.malverntowncouncil.org) includes:
  - Up-to-date information and news about the Town Council
  - Minutes, agendas and reports of all council and committee meetings for the past two years
  - A calendar of meetings
  - A copy of the council's standing orders and financial regulations
  - A copy of council policies
  - Financial reporting information such as information of all payments made
  - Annual accounts and audit information
  - Contact details for councillors and specific council services
  - Advertisement and booking of Town Council events
- The Town Council makes regular use of social media with a regular presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- A newsletter is produced three to four times a year, and distributed with All About Malvern magazines.
- Use of public noticeboards throughout the Town
- Regular distribution of information leaflets via Town Crier, local businesses, TIC etc

### **Opportunities for community involvement**

Malvern Town Council encourages the involvement of residents and community organisations in its activities. In particular:

- A period during every Council and committee meeting is set aside for public participation, which enables residents and representatives of community organisations to comment and ask questions
- The Annual Town Meeting has a specific item for questions from local government electors
- There is a 'contact us' page on the website
- Contact details are available on the Town Council website for councillors, the Town Clerk and Town Council services
- Questionnaires are issued to gain feedback on issues including public consultations and events

Malvern Town Council encourages and supports its local community in the following ways:

- Financial support for organisations working for the benefit of this community through grants
- Provision of sports and recreational facilities for the local community
- Provision of free events for the benefit of all sectors of the local community
- Provision of efficient, effective and best value services for Malvern

## **Involvement in partnerships**

Malvern Town Council is represented on:

- Community Action Malvern and District
- Poolbrook Hall Management Committee
- Malvern Hills CAB Management Committee
- County Association of Local Councils (CALC)
- Malvern-Mariánské Lázně Community Partnership (MLCP)
- Malvern-Bagnères de Bigorre Twinning Association (MBTA)
- Malvern Hills College Task Force

Malvern Town Council also works in close partnership with the following groups:

- Malvern Hills District Council - Regular liaison meetings and joint working on events
- Worcestershire County Council – the County lengthsman scheme and engagement with County Councillors on Highways matters
- The Police – policing charter agreements
- Malvern Civic Society – quarterly meetings with the Chair as required

## **Role of Council members and officers**

Members of Malvern Town Council:

- Attend Council and committee meetings where there is opportunity for public participation
- Discuss all business at Council and committee meetings in public unless there is good reason to exclude the public by reason of the confidential nature of the business
- Are available to be contacted by residents and community organisations and have a dedicated council email address for this purpose
- Represent the Council on community organisations
- Represent the community on planning matters in their ward and raise issues through the Council's Operations and Planning committee as necessary

The Town Clerk and other officers of Malvern Town Council:

- Are available to the public Monday to Friday in the Town Council offices or at Great Malvern Cemetery
- Receive letters, phone calls, emails and website correspondence and pass them on as necessary
- Keep the website up-to-date, publicising matters of interest
- Provide information to members of the public under the Freedom of Information Act.
- Respond appropriately with advice, where required, when members of the public have raised questions within a public meeting.

## **Specific areas for community involvement 2023-24**

Malvern Town Council will consult fully on any major projects. These include:

- The future use of land off Mill Lane/Charlock Road
- Plans to develop and relocate the skateboard park at Victoria Park
- The development of an updated Neighbourhood Plan for Malvern

## **Ways for Malvern Town Council to improve community engagement**

Malvern Town Council aims to improve its engagement with all sectors of the community. This includes maintaining a planned schedule for engagement via social media channels, keeping the website up to date, and regular newsletters.

The Town Council will be mindful of the need to engage fully with hard-to-reach groups including, but not limited to:

- Young people
- Older people
- Ethnic minority groups
- Disabled people
- People with caring responsibilities

**Malvern Town Council is keen to hear all suggestions for improvements in community engagement.**

## Summary of methods of Community Engagement

Area of interest	Actions	Who	When
Minutes	Ensure copies of minutes are available in both hard copy and electronically for residents and community groups	Staff	Ongoing
Office Opening Hours	Publicise office opening hours in any MTC publications and on website & noticeboards	Staff	Ongoing
Annual Town Meeting	Widely publicise the Annual Town Meeting to enable residents to raise matters of interest or concern	Staff & members	Annually (prep in Feb for ATM in March)
Public Forum	Encourage residents to raise any matters of interest or concern via the public forum part of Full Council or at committee meetings	Staff & members	Monthly
Public consultation	Public consultation events held on specific issues at local venues Questionnaires made available as part of public consultation	Staff & members	As relevant
Noticeboards	Regularly update noticeboards with council & community activities	Staff	Ongoing
Website	Maintain website with easily accessible, up-to-date information and news on council services & activities. Include link to Twitter, Facebook etc 'Contact us' information including facility to submit questions or comments Contact email addresses for specific Town Council services Contact email addresses for councillors Ability to book tickets for Town Council events Dates of meetings, agendas, reports and minutes readily available	Staff	Ongoing
Social Media	Maintain presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and consider use of other social media Posting of up-to-date information	Staff	Ongoing
Newsletter	Issue 3 – 4 newsletters each year and ensure they are delivered using All About Malvern magazine to majority of Malvern households Contact details for Town Council and town councillors to be included	Staff	Ongoing
Businesses	Engage with the businesses and business organisations	Staff & members	Ongoing
Residents Association	Encourage councillors to attend Residents Association meetings	Members	Ongoing

<b>Area of interest</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>
Local Democracy	Encourage residents to both vote at and stand for the Town Council in Local Council Elections	Staff & members	Ongoing but high priority in 6 months prior to local elections
Press	Liaise regularly with the press, sending details of council meetings and council activities Regular press releases to local media	Staff	Ongoing
District and County Councillors	Maintain contact with the District Council and County Council members to ensure sharing of information Invite to all Town Council meetings and encourage submission of written reports if unable to attend.	Staff	Ongoing
Questionnaires	Issue online and hard copy questionnaires to gather views of local residents on projects for public consultation and events as required Use of questionnaires to gain feedback on events such as Bands in the Park	Staff	As relevant
Working groups	Steering committees to involve local residents on events such as Christmas and Malvern in Bloom	Staff	Ongoing
Council meetings	Availability of agendas, minutes and reports Public participation sessions at the start of each council and committee meeting Annual Town Meeting to enable residents to raise matters of interest and concern	Staff	Ongoing
General	Council offices open to visitors Monday to Friday Council officers available to answer telephone calls Monday to Friday Administrative officers have email addresses available to the public Use of public noticeboards throughout the town Town Crier distribution of leaflets relating to events, consultations etc Advertisements in local press where appropriate eg grants scheme	Staff	Ongoing