# Community Engagement Policy

The Parish Council exists to serve and represent the people of the Parish, and in order to do this effectively, it needs to establish good, open channels of communication with the wider community. This is done in the following ways:

* Meetings are held in public, are advertised on notice boards and on the parish website and both draft and approved minutes are posted on the website
* Agendas normally include a formal opportunity for members of the public to speak or ask questions on any matter they wish to raise. In addition, the tradition in Brighstone is for meetings to be conducted in an open manner and members of the public are allowed to comment during the discussion of any matter on the agenda, at the discretion of the Chairman
* Reports of Parish Council Meetings, along with the contact details for Councillors and the Clerk and Registrar, are included in the Parish Newsletter which is produced 10 times a year and distributed free to every household in the Parish (and also in Shorwell)
* Contact details for all Councillors and the Clerk and Registrar are included in each edition of the Newsletter and on the website so members of the public can make contact with particular concerns and issues
* Public meetings and other forms of public consultation are held when circumstances require this. Examples include a series of public consultations regarding the Neighbourhood Plan, several housing needs surveys, public meetings regarding large planning applications, proposed changes to the bus timetable etc.. The Newsletter is also used for inviting feedback on specific issues: a recent example is the request for opinions on the wild-flower bank in Main Road.
* The parishes of Brook and Hulverstone, and Mottistone have their own elected Parish Councillor who is expected to be especially familiar with issues in their respective area
* The Annual Parish Meeting provides a particular opportunity for residents to hold the Parish Council to Account and raise any matter of concern. Sometimes a speaker is invited to talk on a topic of interest.
* It is the practice of Brighstone Parish Council to issue an invitation to persons submitting a planning application to attend the meeting when this comes up for consideration. These persons are invited to speak in support of their application at the meeting if they wish to do so.