



Proposal: Monthly Parish Council Community Engagement Sessions

Purpose

To consider the introduction of a regular monthly community engagement session to provide residents with an additional opportunity to meet informally with representatives of the Parish Council, raise concerns, discuss local issues, and learn more about the Council's work.

Background

The Parish Council currently engages with residents through formal meetings, correspondence, and other communication channels. While these methods remain important, some residents may find it difficult or intimidating to attend formal council meetings or may wish to discuss matters in a more informal setting.

It is therefore proposed that a monthly drop-in session be established, providing a welcoming environment where residents can speak directly with the Parish Clerk and a Parish Councillor.

Proposal

That, from September 2026, the Parish Clerk works from the Lansdowne Hall for one morning each month, accompanied by a rotating Parish Councillor.

Proposed arrangements:

- Frequency: Monthly
- Time: 9.00am – 12.00pm
- Venue: Old Meeting Room, Lansdowne Hall
- Attendance: Parish Clerk and one Parish Councillor
- Format: Informal drop-in session for residents
- Refreshments: Tea and coffee available to encourage conversation and engagement

The sessions would provide residents with an accessible opportunity to:

- Raise local concerns and issues.
- Seek information about Parish Council activities.
- Discuss ideas and suggestions for the community.
- Meet councillors in an informal setting.

Trial Period

It is proposed that the initiative be introduced initially as a four-month trial from September to December 2026. During this period attendance levels, resident feedback, and any resulting actions or outcomes would be monitored.

Following the December session, the Council would review the effectiveness of the initiative and determine whether it has delivered sufficient benefits to warrant continuation. Should attendance or community engagement be limited, the trial could be discontinued without further financial commitment.

Financial Implications

The hire cost of the Old Meeting Room is £33.75 per session.

The cost of the proposed four-month trial would be:

Month	Cost
September – December (4 sessions)	£135.00

Should the Council decide following the review to continue the sessions until the end of the financial year, the total cost for September to March would be £236.25.

The trial cost of £135.00 can be met from the Public Participation Budget, with no additional budget allocation required.

Provision of tea and coffee would incur only a minimal additional cost and could be accommodated within existing budgets.

Benefits

- Increases opportunities for resident engagement with the Parish Council.
- Provides a more accessible and informal forum for discussion.
- Strengthens relationships between councillors and the community.
- Enables early identification of local concerns and emerging issues.
- Demonstrates the Council's commitment to openness, accessibility, and community involvement.

Recommendation

That the Parish Council approves a four-month trial of monthly community engagement sessions at Lansdowne Hall from September to December 2026, with associated room hire costs of £135.00 to be funded from the Public Participation Budget, and that the effectiveness of the initiative be reviewed by the Council before any decision is made regarding its continuation.