

Standards committees – raising your profile

John Bridgeman, Chair of Standards Committee,
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Chair: Professor Judy Simons, Board Member,
The Standards Board for England

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Horsham District Council

Working in partnership to secure a better quality of life for all.

Horsham District Council

- Link to parish councils
- Outreach to schools, colleges and young people

Horsham District Council – key facts at summer 2006

- Area: 530km²
- Population: 126,750 (estimated)
- Gross budget 2006/07: £69million
- Net budget 2006/07: £13.813million

Key facts continued

- Staff employed: 522
- Electorate: 98,766
- Dwellings: 54,752
- 32 parish councils and 366 parish councillors

Parish councils – the ways to engage

- Learning
- Communication
- Assistance
- Education
- Information
- Community engagement

Parish councils – the means

- Standards committee agendas to all parish councils
- Parish clerks' quarterly meetings
- Parish clerks' contact numbers
- District Association of Local Councils
- Parish council/cluster meetings

Parish councils – the issues 1

- Part of the approach to parish involvement
- Enthusiasing the parish clerks
- Confidence of elected members

Parish councils – the issues 2

- Significance of the Code
- Understanding the Code
- Application of the Code throughout tenure

Parish councils – the issues 2 continued

- Declaration of interests: what, by whom, objective test
- Members' and officers' roles
- Members' and officers' respect for each other
- Appropriate means of communication

Outreach – the means

- Schools and colleges with sixth forms/youth councils
- Involvement of head teacher and council chairman
- Pre-planning
- Scenarios/background papers
- Presentations and working groups
- Feedback

Outreach – preparation

Before the day:

- involve schools/colleges and students

On the day:

- set up
- arrivals – students, staff members, officers
- refreshments

Outreach – the day

- Welcome:
 - school
 - council chairman and standards committee chair

Outreach – the day continued

- Presentation
- Role play/exercises/video:
 - facilitation by members
- Standards committee meeting
- Appraisal

Outreach – the issues

- Involve schools/colleges and students
- Embrace young people
- Capturing genuine interest
- Schools showing off community credentials

Outreach – the issues continued

- Press and media interest
- Spreading the council's message
- Hard work in the planning

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To fail to plan is to plan to fail

- Where are you now?
- What outcomes do you want?
- How will communications further your wider objectives?
- Which audiences do you need to reach?

Avoid darts in the dark...

Communications objectives should be:

- relevant to your work/objectives
- relevant to your audiences
- SMART

Communicating without aims and targets is like playing darts in the dark.

Making it happen

Capacity and resources

- Training
- Budget
- Professional support and resources from your authority
- National support and resources
- Peers

Consider the tools

Tailor your message to your audience.

- Internal – talks, newsletters, email, intranet
- External – media, council magazine, leaflets, internet

Be proactive

- Create a timetable of activities spread over the year to keep an even profile
- Keep it under review. Make it someone's job
- Be opportunist

Communication issues and challenges

- Engagement
- Accessibility
- Competition for people's interest

RECIPE for success

- Relevant
- Engaging
- Concise
- Informative/interesting
- Pictures and people
- Evaluate

In summary

- Look at what you want to achieve
- Think of your audiences and plan appropriately
- Identify communications opportunities

In summary continued

- Use available help
- Have a plan of activities
- Be creative – excite and engage
- Be accessible – plain English, avoiding jargon

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