



# **Ashbourne Town Council**

## **Survey Policy**

**Reviewed May 2016**

The Survey Policy was reviewed by  
Ashbourne Town Council on .....

Signed ..... (Mayor)



## **ASHBORUNE TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Survey Policy**

#### **Introduction**

Surveys are a valuable method of collecting and assessing opinions in order to effect positive change, they can be used for planning an event or collecting feedback from customers and service users. When used correctly, they can be an important way of providing information that can improve quality and customer satisfaction. This policy aims to establish a coordinated approach for surveying at Ashbourne Town Council.

The aim of this policy is to:

- assure the quality of surveys
- assure that results are shared in a timely fashion, where appropriate
- assure the results will be used for the purposes for which the data was gathered
- improved use of data and reporting of results

#### **Quality of Surveys**

Surveys are to be conducted in accordance with the procedures document set out in Appendix 1. The survey goal is to be at the forefront of the survey, with questions geared around the goal. Survey should be concise and unbiased with a maximum number of questions set at 12.

Every effort should be taken to ensure that the correct demographics are targeted and supporting hard copy of questionnaires be distributed to the target population, results to be entered online by Town Council staff.

Surveys for Town Council use only.

#### **Results**

Survey results are to be available on the website within 10 working days following the end of the survey.

#### **Purpose**

The results will be used for the purpose of which the data was gathered.

#### **Use of Data**

The survey results will be considered when decisions are made.

The Survey Policy was Reviewed by Ashbourne Town Council on

Approved Chair ..... Date .....



## Survey Procedures

### Set a goal

Before you start asking specific questions it's a good idea to set a goal for your survey consider what do you want to know and why.

Keep your goal in mind while composing survey questions, this will ensure that you don't stray from the purpose of the survey.

Once you know why you want to survey consider these top level questions:

- What are the questions I want to answer
- What do I want to learn
- Who is my target population

If you apply these questions when planning an event, you may end up with answers like these:

**What:** Did people enjoy the last event, what specifically did they like, dislike, do they have any recommendations for improvement.

**Who:** I want to send my survey to customers who attended the event, owners of businesses that were affected by the event. Demographics could include first time customers, one time customer, returning customers and retailers

### Consider your respondents

Once you have your goal and a list of questions you want to ask, you should make sure that they are appropriate for the "who" of your survey. Write the survey using language, examples and definitions that cater to the population's knowledge and needs.

#### **USE CLEAR CONCISE AND UNCOMPLICATED LANGUAGE**

Avoid acronyms, technical terms or jargon that may confuse the respondents  
Provide definitions or examples if you need to include tricky terms or concepts

### Keep it personal

If you want people to feel comfortable sharing opinions use phrases like:

- “Do you think”
- “Do you feel”
- “In your opinion”

### **Provide a timeframe**

Use a time frame that makes it easy for respondents to come up with an answer, for example

- In the past month, how many times have you used the Town Hall?

### **Write unbiased questions**

Want high quality data that represents how your respondents truly feel – avoid the 5 common mistakes listed below:

- **BEWARE Leading Questions** – you want your respondents to make their own choices, so make sure you’re not forcing their hand or influencing their answer with a leading question (one that implies that there is a single right answer).
- **BEWARE Loaded Questions** – Make sure your personal opinions don’t sneak into your questions – biased questions can influence your respondents’ answers, especially if they contain loaded language that may produce strong connotations or emotions with respondents.
- **BEWARE Double-barrelled Questions** – make sure that you only ask one question at a time.
- **BEWARE Unbalanced Questions** – Help your respondents feel comfortable expressing their opinion by including both sides in your question.
- **BEWARE Overly Broad Questions** - If you want to get the information you’re looking for, be specific, if you have several specific things you want to learn about write one question for each.

### **Different Question Types and Responses**

#### **Closed-ended vs open-ended questions**

When you want questions that are easy to quantify used closed-ended questions that ask your respondents to choose from pre-specified answer choices. These multiple choice questions give results in terms of simple percentages.

On the flip side, open ended questions ask respondents to answer in their own words. They give respondents the freedom to express themselves and share more thoughtful answers.

Recommend using closed-ended questions

#### **Try to limit the respondent to one selection**

If they tick all that apply questions can be difficult to interpret

#### **Use words not numbers**

When using rating scales use words rather than on a scale of 1 to 10, these are used in satisfaction surveys, how likely are you to:

- Extremely Likely
- Very Likely
- Moderately Likely
- Slightly Likely
- Not at all Likely

### **Use yes/no questions cautiously**

Yes or no chances are that some days you do and other days you don't, by making the respondents choose between "yes" and "no" you're asking them to think in black and white when sometimes you want to understand the grey.

A yes/no choice is good when you are measuring something absolute. IE Do you own a dog? Yes/No answers can also be useful for qualifying potential survey respondents.

### **Consider every option**

Don't force your respondents to choose an answer that's not a good fit, Give them an "Other (please specify)" option

### **Flow and Best Practices**

#### **Use a natural question flow**

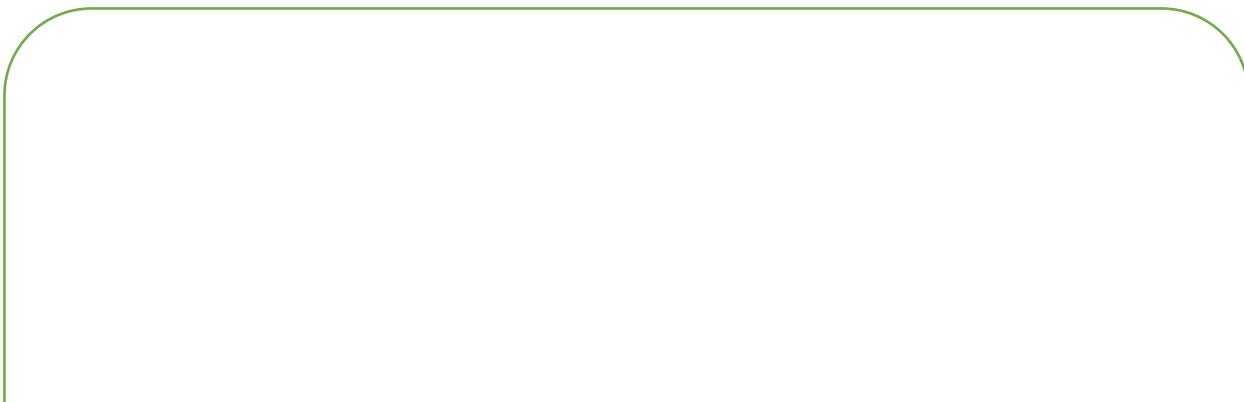
Engage your respondents by giving them easier (and not overly sensitive) questions in the beginning. Keep related questions together and make sure that the first questions in your survey are directly related to your survey's topic

#### **The shorter the better**

Be succinct and don't ask unnecessary questions.

### **Survey Checklist**

#### **Identify your GOAL**



**List the questions I want to answer**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**What do I want to learn**

.....

.....

.....

**Who is my target population**

.....

.....

.....

Have I used clear concise and uncomplicated language	
Are the questions unbiased	
Have I considered closed-ended vs open-ended	
On rating scales used words not numbers	
Have yes/no questions been used cautiously	
Does the questionnaire have a natural flow	

Is it limited to maximum 12 questions	

The Survey Policy was Reviewed by Ashbourne Town Council on

Dated.....

Signed.....