

Communications Protocol

1. Parish Council Correspondence
 - a. The point of contact for the Parish Council is the Clerk.
 - b. The Clerk should deal with all correspondence following a meeting.
 - c. No individual Councillor or Officer should be the sole custodian of any correspondence or information in the name of the Parish Council.
 - d. Most official correspondence should be sent by the Clerk in the name of the Council using Council headed paper. For correspondence not sent by the Clerk, he must be provided with a copy.
 - e. Where correspondence from the Clerk to a Councillor is copied to another person, the addressee should be made aware that a copy is being forwarded to that other person (e.g. copy to xx)
2. Agenda Items for Council.
 - a. Agenda should be clear and concise. They should contain sufficient information to enable Councillors to make an informed decision, and for the public to understand what matters are being considered and what decisions are to be taken at a meeting.
 - b. Items for information should be kept to a minimum on an agenda.
 - c. Where the Clerk or a Councillor wishes fellow Councillors to receive matters for "information only", this information will be circulated via the Clerk.
3. Communications with the Press and Public
 - a. All newsletters, press reports or comments to the media must be approved by the Chairman and the Clerk to the Council.
 - b. Press reports from the Council should be from the Clerk or via the reporter's own attendance at the meeting.
 - c. Unless a Councillor has been authorised by the Council to speak to the media on a particular issue, Councillors who are asked for comment by the press should make it clear that it is a personal view and ask that it be clearly reported as their personal view.
 - d. Unless a Councillor is reporting the view of the Council, they must make it clear to members of the public that they are expressing a personal view.
 - e. If Councillors receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be dealt with under the Council's adopted complaints procedure.
4. Councillor Correspondence to external parties.
 - a. A copy of all outgoing correspondence relating to the Council or a Councillor's role within it, should be sent to the Clerk, and it be noted on the correspondence, e.g. "copy to the Clerk" so that the recipient is aware that the Clerk has been advised.
5. Emails:
 - i. Instant replies should not be expected from the Clerk; reasons for urgency should be stated
 - ii. Information to Councillors should normally be directed via the Clerk
 - iii. E-mails from Councillors to external parties should be copied to the Clerk
 - iv. Councillors should acknowledge their e-mails when requested to do so.