

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

The following Communications Policy was adopted by Woolfardisworthy Parish Council on the 21st February 2017, with the following revisions:

Reviewed	Date	Reviewed	Date
Adopted	21 February 2017	Reviewed	17 September 2019
Reviewed	19 October 2021	Reviewed	21 May 2024

A. Parish Council Correspondence

- 1) The point of contact for the parish council is the Clerk, and it is to the Clerk that all correspondence for the parish council, both electronic and hard copy, should be addressed.
- 2) No individual Councillor or Officer should be the sole custodian of any correspondence or information pertaining to the business of the parish council, a committee, sub-committee or working party.
- 3) All official correspondence, electronic or hard copy should be sent by the Clerk in the name of the council using council letter headed paper. If sent as an electronic attachment, this should be a PDF.
- 4) 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).

B. Agenda Items for Council, Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Parties

- 1) 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 the matters being considered and any decisions to be taken at a meeting.
- 2) Items for information should be kept to a minimum on an agenda.
- 3) Where the Clerk or a Councillor wishes fellow Councillors to receive matters for "information only", this information will be circulated via the Clerk.

C. Communications with the Press and Public

- 1) The Clerk will clear all press reports, or comments to the media, with the Chair of the council or the Chair of the lead Councillor.
- 2) Press reports from the council, its committees or working parties should be from the Clerk and be authorised by the Parish Council.
- 3) 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.

4) If Councillors receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be dealt with under the Council's adopted complaints procedure, or as a council agenda item.

D. Councillor Correspondence to external parties

1) 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.

E. Communications with Parish Council Staff and Councillors

NB: All parish councillors are volunteers who are either voted into office or co-opted. The direct employee of the Parish Council is the Parish Clerk.

E-mails:

- Instant replies should not be expected from the Clerk; reasons for urgency should be stated;
- Information to Councillors should normally be directed via the Clerk;
- E-mails from Councillors to external parties should be copied to the Clerk;
- Councillors should acknowledge their e-mails when requested to do so.
- Should the Clerk request comment, financial recommendation/s and/or approvals via email, every Councillor MUST respond within the timescales stated. Where a Councillor fails to respond within the given timescales it will be assumed that the Councillor's view is neutral
- Councillors should immediately inform the Clerk if electronic communication is not possible.

F. Meetings with the Clerk

- Wherever possible an appointment should be made;
- Meetings should be relevant to the work of the Clerk
- Councillors should be clear that the matter is legitimate council business and not matters driven by personal or political agendas.