

## **COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

### **1. Correspondence / information to the Town Council**

- (i) The point of contact for the Town Council is the Clerk, and it is to the Clerk that all correspondence should be addressed.
- (ii) The Clerk should deal with all correspondence following a meeting.
- (iii) No individual Councillor should be the sole custodian of any correspondence or information in the name of the Town Council, a committee, sub-committee or working party.

### **2. Agenda items for Council, Committees, Sub-Committees & Working Parties**

- (i) Agenda items should be clear and concise.
- (ii) Agenda items should contain sufficient information for members to make an informed decision.
- (iii) Agenda items 'for information' should be kept to a minimum.
- (iv) Where members wish fellow members to receive matters 'for information only' this information should be circulated via the Town Clerk.

### **3. Communications with the press and public**

- (i) Press reports from the Town Council, Committees, etc should be from the Clerk or an Officer or the reporter's own attendance at a meeting.
- (ii) Members who are asked for comment by the press or members of the public should ask that it be clearly reported that it is their personal view. Unless you are absolutely certain that you are reporting the view of the Council, make it clear to the members of the public that it is a personal view.
- (iii) If members have a complaint or receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be presented to the Clerk in written format to be dealt with under the complaints procedure or via a Town Council agenda item. The person's name and address should be on record.

### **4. Councillor correspondence to other agencies**

- (i) All personal correspondence as a Town Councillor to other agencies should make it clear that the views are the expression of personal opinions of the writer and not necessarily those of the Town Council.
- (ii) A copy of all outgoing correspondence relating to the Town Council or one's role within it should be sent to the Clerk and it be noted on the correspondence eg. 'Copy to Clerk' so that the recipient is aware that the Clerk has been advised.

## **5. Communications with Town Council staff**

- (i) Councillors must not give instructions to any member of staff unless authorised to do so (this would be two or more members sitting as a committee or sub-committee with appropriate delegated powers from the council and not as an individual, regardless of whether or not they are the Chairman of the Council, committee or other meeting).
- (ii) Telephone calls:
  - should be kept to a minimum
  - should be appropriate to the work of the Town Council.
- (iii) Emails:
  - should be kept to a minimum
  - instant replies should not be expected from the Clerk
  - reasons for urgency should be stated
  - matters for information to other councillors should normally be directed via the Clerk
  - emails to other agencies should be copied to the Clerk
  - members should acknowledge emails when requested to do so
- (iv) Meetings with the Clerk or other Officers:
  - where possible an appointment should be made
  - the meeting should be relevant to the work of the Council
  - members should be clear about the matters they wish to discuss

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