



COLSTERWORTH AND DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL

COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out the Colsterworth and District Parish Council (CAD) policy and procedures for both its internal and external communications using appropriate media and technologies at its disposal.

The purpose of this document is to formalise the position of the Council with respect to its commitment to maintaining reliable and robust internal communications within its day to day running and external communications with its stakeholders and importantly with the Press and Public.

The procedures contained in this Policy apply equally to both council members and employees.

2. POLICY AND PROCEDURE

2.1. 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 should be addressed.
2. The clerk should deal with all correspondence following a meeting e.g., meeting notes, communicating Council decisions, reports
3. No individual Councillor or Officer should be the sole custodian of any correspondence or information in the name of the Parish Council, a Committee, Sub-Committee or working party. In particular, Councillors and Officers do not have a right to obtain confidential information/ documentation unless they can demonstrate a 'need to know'.
4. All official correspondence should be sent by the Clerk in the name of the council using council letter headed paper.

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

1. Agendas 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.
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.

2.3. 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 relevant Committee.
2. Press reports from the Council, its Committees or working parties should be from the clerk or an officer or via the reporter's own attendance at a meeting.
3. The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulation 2014 became law on 6 August 2014, allowing filming, photography and/or recording of council proceedings by the press or public. The Chairman of the meeting should ask if any person intends to do any of these so that Councillors are aware.
4. No oral report or verbal running commentary is permitted during the meeting.
5. 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.
6. Unless a Councillor is absolutely certain that they are reporting the view of the council, they must make it clear to members of the public that they are expressing a personal view.
7. If Councillors receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be dealt with under the Council's adopted complaints procedure, or via a council agenda item.

2.4. Councillor Correspondence to external parties (including letters, verbal or electronic communication)

1. As the clerk should be sending most of the council's correspondence from a councillor to other bodies, it needs to be made clear that it is written in their official capacity and has been authorised by the Parish Council. The Clerk to maintain a record log of communication and responses using their judgement on how best to process the communication on behalf of the Council.
2. 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.

2.5. Communications with Parish Council Staff

1. No individual councillor, regardless of whether they are the Chair of the council, the Chair of a committee or other meeting, may give instructions to the clerk or to another employee which are inconsistent or conflict with council decisions or arrangements for delegated power.
2. E-mails: - Instant replies should not be expected from the Clerk, but the Clerk will attempt to respond in a timely manner to urgent matters.
3. Information to Councillors should normally be directed via the Clerk;
4. Councillors should acknowledge their e-mails when requested to do

2.6. Secure Email use

1. All Councillors are offered a dedicated Parish Council email address domain 'colsterworthanddistpc.co.uk' and strongly encouraged to use this secure managed email system.

This policy and procedure should be read in conjunction with

- Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation
- General Data Protection Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Code of Conduct

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