

KENWYN PARISH COUNCIL

Communications Protocol/Social Media Guidance

1. Introduction

The purpose of this protocol is to define the roles and responsibilities within the Council regarding communications. It is not the intention of this policy to curb freedom of speech or to enforce strict rules and regulations. Rather, it provides guidance on how to deal with issues that may arise for example when dealing with the media

2. Parish Council Correspondence

- a) 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.

- 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, a committee, subcommittee 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'.

- d) All official correspondence should be sent by the Clerk in the name of the council using council letter headed paper.

- 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).

3. Agenda Items for Council, Committees and Working Parties

- a) 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.

- 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.

4. Councillor Correspondence to external parties

a) As the Clerk should be sending most of the Council's correspondence to other bodies, it needs to be made clear, by the Councillor, that it is written in their official capacity and has been authorised by the parish council.

b) All personal correspondence as a Councillor to other agencies should make it clear that the views expressed are the personal opinions of the writer and not necessarily those of the council.

c) 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

d) Correspondence from the Clerk marked "Confidential" must be treated as such and not be disclosed to anyone

e) If a member of the public requests a copy of any correspondence from a councillor, the matter should be referred to the Clerk who will consider whether the correspondence is in the public domain

5. Communications with Parish Council Staff

Councillors must not give instructions to any member of staff, unless authorised to do so (for example, three or more Councillors sitting as a committee or subcommittee with appropriate delegated powers from the council).