

Stamford Bridge Parish Council Communications Policy

The policy of the Parish Council (PC) will be to deal with all communications wherever possible in an open and transparent manner. There will be some occasions where, due to confidentiality, not all the details will be made known to the public.

1. Parish Council meetings

Meetings and their agendas will be advertised on the notice boards and on the web site/Facebook page 7 days before the meeting, and these meetings will be open to the public, except where confidential items are being discussed.

2. Response to emails

Initial e-mails will normally be dealt with by the Clerk to the PC within 5 working days of receipt.

Where the content is of a business nature the Clerk should deal with these.

Where the content is a resident query, the Clerk will deal with the matter. If however the matter is more complex, the Clerk will consult the Chair or Deputy Chair

Where the content is a complaint to the council this should be passed to the Chair or Deputy Chair to deal with.

3. Media / social media response

Only the Chairman, the Clerk, or (in a specific instance) a councillor appointed for that purpose, will issue any statement on behalf of this Council to written, visual or electronic media.

No councillor, or employee of council, may make a statement to the media on behalf of the parish council; or purport to be acting on behalf of the parish council; or present themselves in such a way that a reasonable person might interpret that the councillor or employee is speaking on the behalf of the council.

Any councillor may make their own statements to the media in a personal capacity but they must ensure that any statement contains such wording as is necessary to make clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the PC. In order to protect themselves, Councillors in such a position should seek advice as to a suitable disclaimer that they should add to any statement they may issue.

It might also help, under such circumstances, to avoid using the title 'Cllr' when making such statements, so that it is clear that it is a personal comment.

4. Telephone response

Initial telephone calls will be dealt with by the Clerk

Should a further response be required, this will be dealt with by the Chair or Deputy Chair depending on who is available

5. Facebook / social media

The PC will operate a Facebook account to enable the PC to reach, the widest possible audience in the village. This will be by using a 'page' format that permits the widest possible audience to have access to the Facebook page and is also found using search engines such as Google

The Facebook page will be administered by the Clerk and two authorised Parish Councillors.

Items posted on Facebook by the PC will be approved by the Clerk, Chairman and the two Administrators.

Items posted by the Public will not be responded to directly on Facebook. The Facebook page will request those posting items, to contact the Clerk to the Council by email, telephone and letter or to attend PC meetings.

6. Website

The Council will operate a website and this will be managed by the Clerk or authorised IT Sub committee member.

Community groups/clubs may have their activities advertised on the web page using the appropriate 'links'

Copies of meeting agendas, minutes and policy documents will be available on the web site, along with yearly Annual Return and Audit Statement. Each Parish Councillors register of Interest will be published on both the Council and ERYC web sites.

After a period of time as defined by the PC archiving policy, historic documents will be removed from the web site

The council will also post any information or report which may, from time to time, be required by legislation.

7. Email group circulation list

The PC will use an email group circulation list to communicate with village clubs/groups on a variety of issues involving the village. This will be administered by the Clerk or a Councillor.

8. The Link Magazine

A summary note of PC meetings will be sent to the Link for publication. The PC will also send communications for publication to the Link on matters that are beneficial to the community.

9. Freedom of Information

The PC will comply with all requests for information as required under the Freedom of Information Act.

10. Data Protection

The PC will comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act by obtaining a yearly registration certificate to comply with all aspects of the Data Protection Act (DPA) and will meet its obligation under the General Data Protection Regulation to ensure that, where necessary, the required permissions have been obtained to hold personal data and keep it safe.

11. Annual and Quarterly Reports

The PC will prepare an annual report of its activities and these will be published in the Link magazine. Reports will contain details of Parish Councillors and their contact details September 2023

