

OLD LAUND BOOTH PARISH COUNCIL

# COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Updated July 2025

# Introduction

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This document aims to establish a protocol for effective communication of the Parish Council's activities and pertinent information to the media and members of the public. The Parish Council is accountable to members of the public and has a duty to convey its decisions and actions transparently. The Parish Clerk is the Proper Officer of the Parish Council and is responsible for all formal communication between the Council, the press and members of the public

## **Protocol**

The Parish Clerk is solely responsible for the preparation of notices of Parish Council meetings, agenda and minutes. These are checked in draft with the Chair

The Parish Clerk is responsible for the development and maintenance of the Parish Council's website so that it remains current

All correspondence addressed to the Parish Council will be actioned by the Parish Clerk on behalf of the Parish Council and in the local authority's name

Agenda will be issued electronically so that they are received by Members at least 3 clear working days before all meetings of the Parish Council. Other relevant information will be emailed to Members in between meetings

Agenda and minutes for all meetings of the Council will be published on the Parish Council's website

Minutes will be published on the Council's website at the earliest opportunity. The website will also be the main source of key governance documents for transparency and openness

The Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, will be responsible for clearing all press reports or comments to the media. These will be delivered by the Clerk. Councillors should ensure that in discussions with the media or the public they represent the Council's agreed corporate view or defer until that view has been agreed. Alternatively, Councillors should state that they are expressing their own views and not speaking on behalf of the Council

All complaints will be referred to the Clerk only in the first instance

No individual Councillor, regardless of whether they are the Chair of the Parish Council, the Chair of a Committee or other meeting, or are styled 'Leader' of the Council, may give instructions to the Clerk which are inconsistent or conflict with Parish Council decisions or arrangements for delegated power

## **Community Engagement**

The Parish Council will facilitate community engagement with its electorate by:

- Publishing its meeting dates, times and venues on its website
- Providing an allocated period for Public Participation in ordinary meetings
- Consulting with the electorate to gauge public opinion
- Maintaining an up-to-date website

The Council will use the following media to communicate its activities on the matters required by the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities:

- Draft Minutes: Website
- Agendas: Website / Noticeboards
- Council Policies/Procedures: Website
- Annual Internal Audit: Website
- Councillor Vacancies: Website / Noticeboards / Local newsletter
- Financial Information: Website

## **Correspondence**

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. This is the most efficient and consistent way of responding to enquiries. This is also important to ensure that the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) are consistently upheld, and the Parish Clerk is the Council's designated custodian Data Processor when receiving correspondence from members of the public

The Clerk should deal with all outgoing correspondence following a meeting on behalf of the Council. All official correspondence (e.g. Parish Council responses to Planning Applications) should be sent by the Clerk in the name of the Council from the Clerk's email address ([clerk@oldlaundboothparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:clerk@oldlaundboothparishcouncil.co.uk))

## **Agenda**

The 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 what matters are being considered and what decisions are to be taken at a meeting. Items for information should be kept to a minimum and be kept brief at the meeting. Where the Clerk or a Councillor wishes fellow Councillors to receive matters for 'information only', this information will be circulated via the Clerk

## **Councillor Correspondence to External Parties**

The Clerk should be sending most of the Parish Council's correspondence from a Councillor to other bodies and will make it clear that it is written in their official capacity and has been authorised by the Parish Council. If this is not possible, a copy of all outgoing correspondence relating to the Parish Council or a Councillor's role within it, should be sent to the Clerk, and it should be noted on the correspondence, e.g. 'copy to the Clerk' so that the recipient is aware that the Clerk has been advised

## **Councillor Communication**

The preferred mechanism for communication between Councillors must be the Parish Council meeting. It is rare that a matter is so urgent that it needs immediate email discussion with the whole Parish Council. However, if a Councillor feels that there is something which needs to be shared with the whole Parish Council urgently he/ she should seek advice from the Clerk (or in her absence the Chair of the Council); the Clerk (or in her absence the Chair of the Council) will decide on the most appropriate course of action and disseminate the information to other Councillors as appropriate

## **Social Media and Website Use**

Councillors must ensure social media use upholds the Council's reputation. Official communication must be via email, phone, or letter. The Clerk will manage any website updates. In the interests of transparency, promptness and, to publicise the work of the Parish Council to the wider world, the Clerk will add news items to the Parish Council's website. These can be provided by Councillors to the Clerk. The Clerk will seek the views of other Councillors, before publicising, if the Clerk thinks there may be objections to the content

**ALL communications by Councillors are subject to the Code of Conduct**

N.B. - any emails copied to the Clerk become official and will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act. These procedures will ensure that a complete, accountable and proper record of all correspondence is kept and could be scrutinised, if necessary