



Parish Council

Communication Policy

25/07/2018

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to guide Willaston Parish Council's Communications activity and public engagement. Communication is a two-way process and the council is committed to maintaining and encouraging regular dialogue with residents and stakeholders so that information and ideas are exchanged both inside and outside of the organisation to improve the Parish Council's service.

This policy has been developed to involve as many people as possible in a variety of ways. The Communications Policy will cover all aspects of the Council's communications with everyone who comes into contact with us either directly or indirectly.

This policy will focus the communication efforts of the Council and support it to be effective and efficient in its activity to serve the people of Willaston. The following five guiding principles will underpin the policy:

- Be accessible/approachable for all
- Be convenient to access
- Be relevant, clear and factual
- Be timely to share the information
- Be inclusive

2.0 Aims and objectives

The Council will ensure that it communicates with all stakeholders in a timely and effective manner to inform and consult them about matters that might affect them and to publicise the services offered by the council. It will endeavour to ensure communication is clear and appropriate for the message and audience. This Communication Policy has the following key objectives:

- To ensure the Parish Council responds to issues raised by the community in a timely manner
- To use a variety of digital and traditional communication channels to ensure the information we provide is accessible for the whole community
- To ensure our messages are relevant, clear and factual to ensure maximum impact and interaction between the Parish Council and our community
- To provide a user friendly and inclusive website to drive interaction with our audiences

- To celebrate success of interest to the community

3.0 Methods of communication and engagement to be adopted by the Council

Methods used by the Council to communicate and engage stakeholders about Council activities will take the form of:

- Parish Council meetings
- The Annual Parish Meeting
- Press Releases where appropriate
- The Council Notice-boards publicising the Council activities
- Publication of notices on the Parish Council's web site and social media if appropriate.
- Council representation on appropriate village groups
- Networking within the community
- By responding to approaches from residents

4.0 Communication with the Council

Councillors have a duty to represent without bias the interests of the whole community. They will always try to do their best and are available to help with regard to matters relating to the Parish of Willaston. Residents having any issues or concerns which they feel the parish council may be able to assist with should feel free to contact any of the parish councillors or the parish clerk.

5.0 Council meetings

The venue for each meeting will be regularly publicised on the council website and notice boards.

An Open Forum is included early in each meeting to allow members of the public to give their views on agenda items and any other parish related matters which they may wish to raise.

6.0 Correspondence

All written correspondence relating to the Parish should be addressed to the Parish Clerk in the first instance. All correspondence to the Parish Clerk (or designated official) will be acknowledged via letter or email, as appropriate, within 7 working

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days of receipt. It is the Council's intention to meet this time scale, but there could be occasions when this is not possible due to holidays or sickness.

7.0 Council website

The Council website will be updated on a regular and timely basis and will include the publication of meeting agendas, minutes of meetings and the latest audit report, as well as other statutory requirements and notices of forthcoming events.

8.0 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Council will be complaint with the principles of the GDPR where applicable. A copy of the council's Privacy Policy is published on the council website and hard copies can be obtained from the clerk if required.

9.0 Communications with the press and public

The clerk will be responsible for clearing all press reports in consultation with the Chairman or relevant committee/sub committee. Parish councillors who are asked for a comment by the press should make it clear that any views they express are personal views, and should be recorded as such, unless it is a matter on which a collective decision has been agreed by the council.

10.0 Complaint handling

The Council has a formal Complaints Procedure which is published on the Council website. Alternatively, a copy of the Complaints Procedure can be obtained from the clerk.

12.0 Review of the Policy

Due to the evolving nature of modern communications Willaston Parish Council will review this policy as required, as part of continuous improvement.

ADOPTED: _____

Chair of Willaston Parish Council

DATE: _____