

# STOCKTON PARISH COUNCIL

## COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

### 1. Aims

To establish clear, easy to use channels of communication between the Parish Council and the Parishioners, and vice versa.

To provide information on important matters in an appropriate manner so as to facilitate and encourage informed comment from interested individuals and groups.

### 2. Introduction

Each Parish Councillor has a duty to represent, without bias, the interest of the whole community. They will endeavour to do their best and are available to help parishioners with regard to matters relating to the parish. They may be contacted by telephone or email and a contact list is displayed on its website and in the Parish Magazine.

If the matter is important, then a letter to the Parish Clerk will ensure that this will be brought before the Parish Council.

### 3. Parish Council Meetings

- The Parish Council will meet at 7.15pm on the third Monday of the month and usually takes place in the Village Hall.
- The Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council will be the May meeting when Councillors will elect the Chair and appoint the Vice Chair for the forthcoming year.
- The Annual Parish Meeting will take place in May in each year.
- A 15-minute open forum for parishioners will be held at the beginning of the Parish Council meetings when they can raise matters of concern.

### 4. Press Relations

Only the Clerk and Chairman have the authority to issue press releases and comments to the local media on behalf of the Parish Council.

### 5. Noticeboards

The following items will be displayed permanently:

- Parish Councillors with contact telephone numbers
- Parish Council meetings dates for the year

Notice of the annual audited accounts will be displayed when appropriate.

The Parish Council meeting notice and agenda will be displayed at least five days in advance of the meeting. Approved minutes of the previous Council meeting will be displayed on the noticeboard and website.

### 6. Annual Report

The Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting will be published annually in The parish magazine and on the website.

### 7. Parish Website

The following items will be permanently available:

- Parish Councillors names
- Parish Council meeting dates for the year
- The approved Parish Council Minutes
- The Parish Council's Annual Report

- The Parish Council's policies and procedures

### **8. Social Networking**

The Parish Council will use Facebook to keep residents informed unofficially of latest activities. All official communications will be published through the Parish Council website. Comments made in response to items posted by the Council on its Facebook page will not be replied to.

Members of staff or councillors using social networking through their personal or professional lives must not comment on the activities of the Parish Council to ensure that the Code of Conduct is not breached.

### **9. Correspondence**

All correspondence relating to the parish should be addressed to the Parish Clerk in the first instance. This will ensure that the matter is recorded and passed to the relevant person or organisation as soon as practicably possible.

If a parishioner wishes a matter to be formally discussed at a Parish Council meeting, then the Parish Clerk must be notified at least 10 days prior to the meeting to enable the item to be placed on the Agenda.

### **10. Annual Parish Meeting**

The Annual Parish Meeting is held so that parishioners can have the opportunity to listen to the progress of the Parish Council over the last year and have the opportunity to debate local issues and celebrate local events and activities.

### **11. Annual Meeting of the Parish Council**

This held immediately after the Annual Parish Meeting and its first task is to appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair and appoint Councillors to its two working groups.

This policy was amended and approved by the Parish Council on 16th July 2018 and will be reviewed every three years.

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