

## Open communication policy

1. The aim of this policy is to encourage open communication between all Parish Councillors, the Clerk and Parishioners. It is also designed to limit personal risk to councillors in mis-communication.
2. We recognise that as Parish Councillors we are constantly communicating with Parishioners and each other. With the development of social media, councillors are contactable at any hour and response mechanisms have also become more flexible, including the facility of immediacy. This can potentially result in ill thought-through communication or a failure to consult where appropriate or even in the dissemination of inaccurate or misleading information, despite our best intentions.
3. It is sometimes difficult to identify where formal communication is more appropriate than the stating of personal views. Where formal communication is required RPC follows the procedure set out below.

### 4. Correspondence

- The main point of contact is the Clerk;
- Where councillors receive email or letters which should be managed on a formal basis these should be copied to the Clerk so that action taken can be tracked;
- No individual councillors should be the sole custodian of correspondence or information in the name of the Parish Council, a working group or a sub-committee;
- Official correspondence should be sent from the Clerk in the name of the Council using Council headed notepaper;
- Council headed note paper should not be used in correspondence e.g. private communication with Parishioners or fellow councillors;
- Wherever possible email and correspondence should show who is copied into the correspondence.

### 5. Communication with Parishioners

Unless a Councillor is certain that they are reporting the collective view of the Council they must make it clear that they are expressing a *personal* view.

### 6. Press communication

- All communication with the Press should be agreed with the Chair or (in his/her absence) the Vice-Chair of the Parish Council and the Clerk prior to being issued;
- Unless a Councillor has been authorised to speak to the media on an issue, Councillors should make it clear that it is a *personal view* and ask that any sound bites should be reported as such.