

Littlebury Parish Council Communication Policies

Date	Revision
January 2024	First version. Adopted by resolution at Council meeting on 17 January 2024
December 2025	Revision to reflect increased use of messaging apps and social media. Adopted by resolution at Council meeting on 10 December 2025

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Littlebury Parish Council Communications Policies

Introduction

This document sets out the protocols to be used by councillors and the clerk when communicating on Parish Council business between themselves, with constituents, with other public bodies and organisations, with suppliers, and with the media.

These protocols are intended to provide a framework for internal and external communication that will ensure co-ordination, transparency and robustness in the conduct of the Council's business.

1. Interactions with residents and general public

1.1. Councillors and the clerk are encouraged to engage with residents to understand their concerns and bring them to the attention of the Council.

1.2. The Council will respond to issues that arise once a considered view or course of action has been agreed by the majority, or exceptionally in urgent cases, by the Chair.

1.3. Initial communication by councillors or the clerk with residents or others before a response has been agreed will acknowledge and advise that the matter will be circulated to the Council as a whole for consideration.

1.4. Councillors or the clerk will not, when acting in that capacity, unilaterally initiate contact with other bodies, express views or give undertakings to residents before a course of action is agreed by the whole Council or, in urgent cases, by the Chair.

1.5. Meetings on matters relevant to Council policy or business should not be held with groups of residents, landowners or businesses within the Parish unless at least two councillors are present and the Chair has been advised in advance.

1.6. Any meetings under section 1.5 should be recorded and a copy lodged with the Chair and the clerk.

2. Interactions with the Media

2.1. Councillors or the clerk should not initiate meetings or communications with the media (TV, newspapers, on-line forums, etc.) unless such interactions have been approved by the Council or, in urgent cases, by the Chair.

2.2. Any article published or recorded by a councillor or the clerk and which contains material considered to be of Council business must be approved in advance by the Council or in urgent cases by the Chair.

2.3. When dealing with the media councillors or the clerk must take every step to ensure that any opinions expressed are clearly identified as their own and not those of the Council.

3. Council email accounts

3.1. All councillors and the clerk will be assigned a dedicated council email address.

3.2. Councillors and the clerk will use their council email address as the primary vehicle for electronic communication of Council business internally and externally.

3.3. Councillors and the clerk may not use their council email address for personal communications.

3.4. Councillors and the clerk may not delete any Council communication chains from their council email accounts. This does not apply to externally generated “junk” mail.

3.5. When a councillor resigns or fails to be re-elected from the Council access to his/her email account will be closed. The contents of the mailbox will be archived in accordance with Council policies.

3.6. When the clerk resigns or leaves the employ of the Council access to his/her named email account will be closed. The contents of the mailbox will be archived in accordance with Council policies. The passwords of generic accounts such as clerk@ and accounts@ will be changed.

3.7. Councillors’ external emails on sensitive topics should be copied to the clerk and chair for information.

3.8. Councillors and the clerk may not use personal email accounts for Council business.

4. Messaging Apps

4.1. Councillors and the clerk may use a dedicated group chat for rapid communication amongst themselves

4.2. Councillors and the clerk should minimise discussion of Council related issues on messaging apps and make it clear that any opinions expressed are their own and not those of the Council.

4.3. Councillors and the clerk should not commit the Council to any specific action on community chat groups.

4.4. The clerk may post Council approved responses or points of information on community chat groups.

4.5. In general posts under 4.4 should direct recipients to the Parish website for further information.

5. Social media

5.1. The Council will not use social media to communicate with residents.

5.2. Councillors and the clerk who use social media will, when posting on any topic that may be perceived as overlapping with Council business, make it clear in their post that they are expressing a personal view, not that of the Council.

6. Parish website and Magazine

6.1. The Council will maintain a website to disseminate information about and from the Council and other organisations in the Parish.

6.2. Agendas and minutes of all Council meetings, and audited financial statements will be posted on the website.

6.3. The clerk will post a short report of the proceedings of Council meetings in the Parish magazine

6.4. The Parish magazine may also be used to convey other Council approved information to residents.

7. Rationale

7.1. It is essential that messaging from the Council is considered and represents the collective view and not that of individual councillors or the clerk

7.2. The use of dedicated email accounts by councillors and the clerk facilitates relatively easy compliance with Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation.

7.3. The Council does not have the resources to manage corporate social media accounts or to engage in discussions on group chats.

7.4. Social media platforms and messaging apps are not structured to provide an auditable trail of communications. Thus compliance with Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation is much more difficult.

7.5. Posts by councillors or the clerk on social media or group messaging apps risk doubt arising as to whether the content is being posted on behalf of the Council or in an individual capacity.