

EIGHT ASH GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

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Communications Policy

This Policy was reviewed and adopted by the Council at the meeting held Wednesday 19th May 2021, Item 8-21/22

Overview

Communications is such an important part of the relationship between the Parish Council, the local community and all the various forms of media which exist. There is an obvious need to ensure consistency of response, no matter whether it is an email from an outside company or local newspaper, or a request to provide a statement on a local situation, which may have happened.

This Policy has been introduced with the above primarily in mind, however, it should also be noted that this Policy is intended to cover ALL communications from outside bodies, not just the media, but local firms and organisations as well.

Policy framework

The simple general principle involved within this Communications Policy is that ALL enquiries received by a Councillor, whether verbal, written or electronic, should in the first instance be directed to the Parish Clerk. The Parish Clerk will then respond to that enquiry after consulting if necessary with the Chairperson. This will ensure consistency of response. If a specific statement is to be produced and released, then the Parish Clerk will formulate the statement, again after consulting with the Chairperson if needed, and other Councillors where the subject matter may be known to them, and the detail they hold on the subject, may be of relevance.

It should be noted that any statement/response issued by the Parish Clerk will be restricted to topics known to the full Council, which have been debated, and any decisions agreed already by the full Council. Should a subject arise which has not already been discussed at full Council, then the Parish Clerk will liaise with the Chairperson, to decide on the 'best way forward'. In instances of this nature, the probable initial response will be that as the matter has not been discussed, then no further statement could be made until it has. A full response may then be forwarded following a meeting of the full Council.

Should a Councillor recognise a good media opportunity, then again, in the first instance they should approach the Parish Clerk, who along with the Chairperson will prepare any statement or agree any approach to the media. If a Councillor serving on a working group receives a request regarding the subject matter being discussed on that working group, then again, in the first instance, the request should be immediately brought to the attention of the Parish Clerk for consideration. The Parish Clerk, with possibly assistance from the Chairperson, may then decide to speak with Councillor/s on the working group for further details prior to organising a response.

This Policy is also intended to cover in principle any request, invitation, from private organisations and Companies. Should such a communication be received of this nature, then again, in the first instance, the matter should be referred to the Parish Clerk. The Clerk, after consultation with the Chairperson will again decide on the best way forward in situations like these. This may mean a simple circulation of some information to the full Council.

Finally, this policy also includes the attendance of Parish Councillors at pre-arranged meetings with members of the public or organisations. Wherever possible attendance should be in twos with either another Councillor or the Parish Clerk in attendance.