

HAYTON PARISH COUNCIL

Communications Protocol

Parish Council Correspondence

- a) All correspondence shall be addressed to the Clerk.
- b) The Clerk should deal with all correspondence following a meeting.
- c) No individual Councillor or Clerk to the Council should be the sole custodian of any correspondence or information in the name of the parish council, a committee, sub-committee or working party. In particular, Councillors and Officers do not have a right to obtain confidential information/documentation unless they can demonstrate a 'need to know'.
- d) All official correspondence, including electronic formats should be sent by the Clerk in the name of the council using council letter headed paper.
- e) Where correspondence from the Clerk to a Councillor is copied to another person, the addressee should be made aware that a copy is being forwarded to that other person (e.g. copy to XX).

Agenda items for Council, Committees, Sub-committees and Working Parties

- a) Agendas should be clear and concise. They should contain sufficient information to enable Councillors to make an informed decision, and for the public to understand what matters are being considered and whether decisions are to be taken at the meeting.
- b) Items for information should be kept to a minimum on an agenda.
- c) Where the Clerk or Councillor wishes fellow Councillors to receive matters for 'information only', this information will be circulated via the Clerk.

Communications with the Press and Public

- a) Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.
Namely:
 - The Chairman will deal with the press and/or other media in consultation with the Clerk
 - The Vice Chairman will deal with the press and/or other media in consultation with the Clerk in the absence of the Chairman
 - The Clerk will deal with the press and/or other media in the absence of both the Chairman and the Vice Chairman
- b) If Councillors receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be dealt with under the Council's adopted complaints procedure.

Communications with Parish Clerk

- a) Councillors must not give instructions to any member of staff, unless authorised to do so (for example, three or more Councillors sitting as a committee or sub-committee with appropriate delegated powers from the council).
- b) No individual councillor, regardless of whether or not they are the Chair of the council, the Chair of a committee or other meeting, may give instructions to the Clerk which are inconsistent or conflict with council decisions or arrangements for delegated power.
- c) Telephone calls should be appropriate to the work of the parish council.
- d) Emails:
 - Instant replies should not be expected from the Clerk; reasons for urgency should be stated;
 - Information to Councillors should normally be directed via the Clerk;
 - Any councillors who represent other authorities should relay any information pertaining to the parish to the Clerk to relay to the Council either as an agenda item or for information only
 - Councillors should acknowledge their emails when requested to do so.
- e) Meeting with the Clerk or other officers:
 - Wherever possible an appointment should be made;
 - Councillors should be clear that the matter is legitimate council business and not matters driven by personal or political agendas.

The Protocol shall be reviewed annually.

Approved by Hayton Parish Council on 17 May 2017

Chairman