

PENSAX PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

The guidance on communications detailed below should be followed by the Clerk and Councillors of Pensax Parish Council.

Parish Council Correspondence

- The point of contact for Pensax Parish Council (the Council) is the Clerk, and it is the Clerk that all correspondence for the Council should be addressed.
- The Clerk should deal with all correspondence following a meeting.
- No individual Cllr or the Clerk should be sole custodian of any correspondence or information in the name of the Council. In particular, Cllrs and the Clerk do not have a right to obtain confidential information or documentation unless they can demonstrate a 'need to know'.
- All official correspondence should be sent by the Clerk in the name of the Council using Council letter headed paper.
- Where correspondence from the Clerk to a Cllr 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 and Working Parties

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

Communications with the Press and Public

- The Clerk will clear all press reports, or comments to the media, with the Chair of the Council.
- Press reports from the Council should be from the Clerk or via the reporter's own attendance at a meeting.
- Unless a Cllr has been authorised by the Council to speak to the media on a particular issue, Councillors who are asked for a comment by the press should make it clear that it is a personal view and ask that it should be clearly reported as their own personal view.
- Unless a Cllr is absolutely certain that he/she is reporting the view of the Council, they must make it clear to members of the Public that they are expressing a personal view.
- If Cllrs receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be dealt with under the Council's adopted complaints procedure or via a Council agenda item.

Councillors Correspondence to External Parties

- As the Clerk should be sending most of the Council's correspondence from a Cllr to other bodies, it needs to be made clear that it is written in their official capacity and has been authorised by the Council.
- A copy of all outgoing correspondence relating to the Council or a Cllrs role within it, should be sent to the Clerk, and it be noted on the correspondence, e.g. "copy to the Clerk" so that the recipient is aware that the Clerk has been advised.

Communications with Pensax Parish Council Officers and Clerk

- Cllrs must not give instructions to the Clerk unless authorised to do so.
- No individual Cllr, regardless of whether or not they are the Chair of the Council, may give instructions to the Clerk which are inconsistent or conflict with Council decisions or arrangements for delegated powers.
- Telephone calls should be appropriate to the work of the Council.

Emails

- Instant replies should not be expected from the Clerk; reasons for urgency should be stated.
- Information to Cllrs should be directed via the Clerk.
- Cllrs should acknowledge their emails when requested to do so.

Meetings with the Clerk

- Wherever possible an appointment should be made.
- Meetings should be relevant to the work of the Council.
- Cllrs should be made clear that the matter is legitimate Council business and not matters driven by personal or political agendas.
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