

EASTON PARISH COUNCIL

Communication Policy

Aims

To establish clear, easy to use channels of communication between the Parish Council and Parishioners, and vice versa.

To provide information on important matters in a timely manner so as to facilitate and encourage informed comment from interested individuals and groups.

To promote better communication, in order to lead to better decisions and ultimately to a better community spirit.

Introduction

Each Parish Councillor has a duty to represent, without bias, the interests of the whole community.

They will always try and do their best and are available to help parishioners with regard to matters relating to the Parish of Easton.

Parish Councillors may be contacted via the Clerk in the first instance or in person.

If you feel that the matter is important, then a letter to the Parish Clerk will ensure that it is dealt with in a timely and professional manner.

Parish Council Meetings.

The Parish Council generally meets at Easton Village Hall on the second Monday of every month as of September 2016 this will move to the first Monday of the month unless a Bank holiday falls on that date when the meeting will be the following Monday.

Public Consultation will be scheduled at each Parish Council Meeting to allow parishioners to give their views on agenda items and any other Parish-related issues.

Notice Boards

The following items will be displayed on the noticeboard outside the Village Hall.

- Contact details for the Clerk
- The latest meeting agenda - which will be posted at least 3 working days in advance of each meeting
- The draft Minutes of the previous meeting
- Meeting dates for the year

The information displayed on the Parish Notice Board will be kept up-to-date.

Correspondence

All correspondence relating to the Parish should be addressed to the Parish Clerk in the first instance. This will ensure that the matter is recorded and passed to the relevant person or organisation as soon as practically possible.

All correspondence to the Parish Clerk will be acknowledged within one week of receipt if at all possible. If email is used then an acknowledgment will be sent via email.

Councillors will be notified of correspondence, but the addressee will not be named on minutes of meetings unless requested. Anonymous correspondence in any form will be recorded as received but not responded to.

Email should be thought of in the same way as a letter. A subject line, the sender's name and the content should be in the main body of the email, not as an attachment.

Attachments will not be opened unless the Clerk has prior knowledge of the subject. The Council regrets that, for reasons of computer security and virus protection, anonymous emails and those with no subject in the title will not be opened or actioned.

A parishioner may raise any issue directly with the Parish Clerk or any Councillor. If a satisfactory answer cannot be given immediately the issue may be placed on the agenda for the attention of the full Council.

The Clerk will acknowledge all Freedom of Information requests within seven working days and will reply fully within 20 working days of receipt of the request. If this is not possible, a further holding letter/email will be sent with an expected completion date.

It is the Parish Council's intention to meet the timescales detailed below but there could be occasions when this is not possible. When this happens the Parish Council will review their procedures and where necessary make changes to the policy or procedures.

Website

The Parish Clerk will arrange for the Agenda and associated papers to be posted on the Parish Council section of the Easton Village Website at least three clear days before the meeting and for the draft Minutes to be posted as soon as possible after the meeting. The final Minutes will also be posted once approved.

In order to comply with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities, the Clerk will arrange for the annual publication of the following documents no later than 1 July each year:

- a. all items of expenditure above £100
- b. end of year accounts
- c. annual governance statement
- d. internal audit report

- e. list of councillor or member responsibilities
- f. the details of public land and building assets
- g. Minutes, agendas and meeting papers of formal meetings

The Parish Clerk will ensure that the Parish Council email address is publicised.

Parish Councillors

If any Parish Councillor is approached by or approaching an external agency or individual on a matter not yet voted on by The Parish Council. The councillor must make it clear that this is their personal opinion only.

Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting is convened by the Chairman of the Parish Council and is generally held in May each year to provide parishioners with a summary of the activities of the Parish Council over the previous year and the opportunity to debate local issues and celebrate local events and activities.

Adopted at a meeting on 11 July 2016