



## **COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

### **AIMS OF THE POLICY**

1. Landulph Parish Council has a duty to engage effectively with its residents, agencies that it works with, press and other stakeholders. This policy covers all forms of two-way communication between Landulph Parish Council and other bodies. Communication may be broadcast (eg a notice on a noticeboard) or to an individual (eg email to an individual resident). The method of communication may be printed, digital or by word of mouth.
2. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Parish Council's Standing Orders and Code of Conduct.
3. The Parish Council recognises its responsibility to communicate accurate and timely information to the press and public in a professional manner. Proper co-ordination will ensure that messages put out by the Parish Council are consistent and accurate.
4. The Parish Council is accountable to the local community for its actions and this can only be achieved through effective two-way communication. The overall aim is that Council communications should be a two-way process:
  - a. to give people the information to understand accurately what the Council does, so that they can make informed decisions; and
  - b. to get information from residents and stakeholders so that the Council can understand their needs.
5. The purpose of the Parish Council's Communications Policy is to ensure its Councillors and Clerk effectively communicate information in a timely fashion to promote the openness and transparency of the Council.
6. The Parish Council also recognises the distinction between communication from 'the Parish Council', and communication from individuals as 'Councillors' and communication from individuals who are Councillors but are expressing a personal opinion.
7. Local councils and their representatives are governed by national legislation and codes of practice. The law governing communications in local authorities can be found in the Local Government Acts 1986 and 1988. Communications activity must adhere to the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity 2011, which provides guidance on the content, style, distribution and cost of local authority publicity. This code is statutory guidance and therefore councils must have regard to it and follow its provisions.
8. Communications during the pre-election period (previously known as 'purdah') are governed by Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986 as amended in 1988. Care should be taken to ensure that any published material does not appear in any way to affect public support for a political party.

### **CONTENT GUIDELINES**

1. Where ever practical all communications should be stored within the shared drive.
2. Content should:
  - a. be civil, respectful, relevant, balanced, up to date and timely;
  - b. not be knowingly unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive;
  - c. not knowingly promote 'fake news';
  - d. not contain content knowingly copied from elsewhere, for which we do not own the copyright;

- e. not contain photos of people taken without their written consent;
- f. not contain any personal information other than basic contact details without explicit permission;
- g. be moderated by the Clerk to the Council if it is official Council business;
- h. not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising.

## **SPECIFIC FORMS OF COMMUNICATION**

1. Differing forms of communications require different approaches as specified below. New methods of communication, must be approved by the Parish Council.
2. Information should be published using multiple channels to ensure it reaches as wide an audience as possible.

<b>Channel</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Website</b>	Public record of Parish Council activities, community information needs to be included with moderation by the Clerk.
<b>Noticeboards</b>	Used for publishing Parish Council notices and Community notices – content needs to be moderated by the Clerk or a Councillor.
<b>Parish Newsletter</b>	Articles and Notices from the Parish Council may be published in the Parish Newsletter but the Parish Council does not moderate the overall content.
<b>Parish Email Newsletter</b>	Summary of information published by the Parish Council through other channels with links to further details. Email list needs to comply with GDPR.
<b>Facebook accounts (including Landulph Innit)</b>	Posts on behalf of the Parish Council should be limited to providing information (eg road closures) and the agreed Parish Council position on issues.
<b>Public meetings</b>	Presentations by Councillors at public meetings are included in this policy.
<b>Surveys</b>	Surveys should be designed according to best practice and avoid collecting personal data wherever possible. Results should be stored according to GDPR.
<b>Emails to individuals</b>	Council email addresses should be used for all Parish Council business.
<b>Letters to individuals</b>	Normally sent by the Clerk using headed notepaper.
<b>Instant messages inc Whats App</b>	Should not be used for Parish Council decision making.
<b>Whats App Council Group</b>	Should not be used for Parish Council decision making.
<b>Video Conferences</b>	Participation by Councillors in video conferences should be in line with the code of conduct. Video conferences may be recorded provided permission of the participants has been agreed.
<b>Parish Council official documents</b>	Need to be approved by the Parish Council.
<b>Emergency Plan &amp; Whats App</b>	Use needs to be relevant to the aims of the Parish Council Emergency Plan.