

Adopted on: 17 th Dec 2020	Agenda Item 7
Signed by: Parish Clerk & Chairman	

BURTON-IN-KENDAL PARISH COUNCIL

COMMUNICATION POLICY

This communications policy applies to Burton-in-Kendal Parish Council, Clerk and Members. The purpose of this policy is to offer clear guidance on how to deal with communication.

The policy will be published on the website so that those writing to the Council know how their correspondence will be dealt with.

The point of contact for the Parish Council is the Clerk, and it is to the Clerk that all correspondence for the Parish Council should be addressed.

It is the Clerks responsibility to forward all relevant correspondence to the Council. The Clerk will make a professional decision not to circulate some items of correspondence such as marketing items or emails which require re-direction to other bodies, such as South Lakeland District Council.

Any correspondence addressed to the Parish Council will not be considered confidential unless clearly marked so or of a personal nature and will be considered to be 'in the public domain'.

The Clerk will have discretion on how to deal with correspondence labelled confidential.

PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERATION OF CORRESPONDENCE AT MEETINGS

Correspondence received prior to the agenda deadline (ten days prior to the Parish Council Meeting) will be catalogued and presented to the Council with the Agenda and paperwork for the meeting if it requires a response by the Council.

Any correspondence received after that date, unless of an absolute urgent nature or planning, licensing or tree works, cannot be included on the Agenda and will be considered the following month.

Councillors must make it known to the Clerk or Chairman if they particularly want an item of correspondence that does not demand a response to be discussed on the Agenda prior to the deadline, otherwise it will be at the discretion of the Chair and Vice Chair as to whether it goes on the agenda.

WRITTEN, VERBAL OR INTERVIEW COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL FOR OFFICER AND MEMBERS

The Chair or in his/her absence Vice Chair will be the public representative of the Council with a role of promoting the role and work of the Council and its policies.

The Chair will respond to external events and media enquiries where the policy of the Council is clear. Any activity will be copied to the Clerk and will be recorded as media activities on the Clerks report.

Where another member is authorised to communicate on behalf of the Parish Council, they must make it clear that they are acting on behalf of the Parish Council and may sign off the communication "on behalf of Burton-in-Kendal Parish Council". Councillors are not permitted to misrepresent the position and views of the Parish Council. Unless a Councillor 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.

As all Councillors have been appointed on a non-party political basis the title of **Councillor** should not be used by any member to support publicly a particular political party.

If Councillors engage in correspondence as a representative of the Parish Council, they must copy the Clerk into that correspondence and relevant items will be included on the Clerk's report.

Should correspondence relate to a working group the whole group should be copied in to avoid duplication.

If Councillors receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be immediately referred to the Clerk.

COMMUNICATION BY EMAIL

Councillors must ensure that any communication follows the principles set out in the Code of Conduct in particular to show respect to others.

Councillors and the Clerk must take care to ensure that confidential information is not disclosed so as to place the Council at risk of breach of confidentiality or

Councillors may discuss Council business via email and must be mindful communications are in the public domain unless marked otherwise.

Councillors are free to obtain information and exchange views in respect of a particular issue, provided that they do not use improper influence to affect the outcome of a decision. This sort of pre-meeting activity is **not** a substitute for considering a matter at a formal meeting.