Sedgeford Parish Council

Serving the Community

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This communications policy applies to Sedgeford Parish Council Officer and Members.

The purpose of this policy is to offer clear guidance on how to deal with communication.

COUNCIL COMMITMENT

The Parish Council is committed to the provision of accurate information in respect of its functions, decisions and actions. Accordingly, great care needs to be taken when addressing communication within the Parish Council and with outside bodies.

LEGAL CONTEXT

This policy is subject to the Council's statutory obligations set out in the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1986, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Council's Standing Orders.

COMMUNICATION WITH MEDIA

Interviews, statements and articles.

The media shall contact the Clerk if they want to:

- Interview councillors or staff about its business decisions and actions or
- Obtain a verbal or written statement from the Council about its decisions or actions

If the Clerk is not available, the media should contact the Chair of the Parish Council. Details of the Chair may be obtained from the website.

Only the Clerk is authorised to communicate on behalf of the Parish Council. Individual members cannot communicate on behalf of the Parish Council unless expressly authorised to do so at a council meeting or committee.

WRITTEN, VERBAL OR INTERVIEW COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL FOR OFFICER AND MEMBERS

Official verbal or written statements

Any verbal or written statement given by the Clerk to the media represents the corporate position and views of the Council and not the individual views of its councillors nor staff.

Councillors and staff cannot, in their official capacity, provide verbal or written statements to the media, or write articles for publication in the media about the Council's business, decisions and actions without prior written consent of the Council.

Where a 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 Sedgeford Parish Council".

Members may not hold themselves out to be acting on behalf of the Parish Council and must not communicate as councillor in any other matter than in their official capacity. They must make it clear that they are representing themselves individually and must not sign off any communication as "Councillor".

Councillors are not permitted to misrepresent the corporate position and views of the Council, or to damage the reputation of others in the Council or the Council itself.

Private verbal or written statements or interview.

Councillors are not permitted to use the title "Councillor" in their private capacity.

The Clerk is not permitted to use the title "Clerk" in their private capacity.

Councillors and staff cannot communicate their personal views about the Council's business, decisions and actions other than the views they hold in their official capacity.

Interviews

An interview by the media with councillors in their official capacity about the Council's business, decisions and actions requires the Council's prior written consent.

In any such interview, Councillors shall not communicate their personal views about the Council's business, decisions and actions other than the views they hold in their official capacity.

Councillors are not permitted to misrepresent the corporate position and views of the Council, or to damage the reputation of others in the Council or the Council itself.

COMMUNICATION BY EMAIL

Acceptable Email Use

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

Responsibilities

- Councillors communicating in an official capacity must not communicate their personal views. They may only communicate views they hold in an official capacity.
- Councillors are not permitted to debate matters of council business by e-mail. The correct procedure is for the debate to take place at a public meeting.
- Councillors have a duty to consider responsibilities that a council has towards members of the public, employees and other councillors.
- Councillors must take care to ensure that confidential information is not disclosed so as to place the council at risk of breach of confidentiality.

Adopted May 2026

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