

Bucklebury Parish Council

Communications Policy

Reason for the Establishment of the Policy

The growth of e-mail traffic on BPC business and instances of councillors having direct communication with external agencies, e.g. West Berkshire Council (WBC), necessitates the establishment of a BPC Communications Policy. This Policy covers all internal communications by councillors and the Clerk and engagement with outside organisations.

General Principles

In communicating and interfacing with external agencies, councillors' authority extends to discussing an issue with the agency, but before any agreement or action is taken, ratification must be given by the BPC Chairman and, if appropriate, by some or all, of the Council.

Councillors are to be advised of business undertaken by the Chairman and Clerk and of decisions taken between BPC meetings.

For councillors without e-mail access, it is the Clerk's responsibility to keep them appraised of BPC business.

Minutes of BPC meetings should be distributed to BPC councillors within 10 working days of a meeting. A notice should be posted on BPC noticeboards informing parishioners that hard copies of BPC minutes are available from the Clerk. In time they may also be available on the BPC website. Notice of forthcoming BPC meetings will be placed on BPC noticeboards.

A councillor should be appointed to provide a summary of BPC meetings for The Newbury Weekly News and alert the NWN to issues when appropriate.

Use of E-mails

The aim, in time, is that all councillors should have a discrete BPC e-mail address for the conduct of Council business. E-mail will be used primarily for the dissemination of information and to allow the Clerk to maintain an audit. Councillors should copy the Clerk on all e-mail traffic and select appropriate action points from e-mails for discussion or ratification at the next BPC meeting.

The Clerk will retain a record of e-mails of significance.

Use of Letters

Individual councillors can, with BPC authority, correspond with external agencies through the Clerk. This should be done by sending a draft to the Clerk who will forward it to the Chairman before it is posted. Councillors should recognise that the views they express must be those of the Council and not their own.

The Clerk will keep a copy of all letters.

Clerk to the Parish Council

Mrs. H. Pratt, Jasmine Cottage, Byles Green, Upper Bucklebury, Reading. RG7 6SD.

Tel. 01635 863581

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Use of Telephone

The Clerk and Councillors should retain a brief record of telecommunications of any significance with external agencies.

The Oaks

The BPC newsletter, "The Oaks" should be proof read by the Clerk, Chairman, or an appointed councillor, before publication. The final copy should be the decision of The Parish Council.

Clerk to the Parish Council

Mrs. H. Pratt, Jasmine Cottage, Byles Green, Upper Bucklebury, Reading. RG7 6SD.

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