

ELKESLEY PARISH COUNCIL

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how the Parish Council communicates with residents, partners, and the media. Its aims are to ensure communication is **accurate, timely, accessible, and professional**, and that councillors and staff understand their roles.

2. Principles

The Council will communicate in a way that is:

- **Open and transparent** – sharing information unless legally restricted.
- **Accurate and factual** – avoiding speculation or personal opinion in official outputs.
- **Timely** – providing updates as soon as practical.
- **Accessible** – using clear language and formats suitable for all residents.
- **Respectful and non-political** – reflecting the Council's corporate position, not individual views.

3. Official Channels

The Council may use:

- The **Parish Council website**
- Official **email accounts**
- **Noticeboards**
- **Social media** platforms authorised by the Council
- **Public meetings** and consultation events
- **Press releases** where appropriate Only channels formally approved by the Council may be used for official communication.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Clerk** – Acts as the primary point of contact for official communications, website updates, public statements, and media enquiries.
- **Chair** – May act as spokesperson when authorised or when a civic role requires it.
- **Councillors** – May share factual information but must not speak on behalf of the Council unless authorised. Personal views must be clearly identified as such.
- **Working Groups** – May prepare content but must route all public communication

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through the Clerk.

5. Social Media

- Posts must be factual, neutral, and relevant to Council business.
- Comments or messages requiring a response should be acknowledged and passed to the Clerk.
- Councillors using personal accounts must avoid giving the impression they speak for the Council.
- Offensive or defamatory comments may be removed or reported in line with platform rules.

6. Media Handling

- All media enquiries must be directed to the Clerk in the first instance.
- Statements will reflect the Council's agreed position, not individual opinions.
- Councillors may speak to the media in a personal capacity but must make this distinction clear.

7. Public Engagement

The Council will:

- Provide clear information about meetings, decisions, and consultations.
- Encourage constructive engagement from residents.
- Use plain English and accessible formats wherever possible.

8. Emergencies or Sensitive Issues

In urgent or sensitive situations, the Clerk (or Chair if the Clerk is unavailable) will issue timely, factual updates. Speculation or unverified information must not be shared.

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed every **two years** or sooner if legislation, technology, or Council needs change.

Policy adopted – May 2026 (replaced EPC Social Media Policy & Electronic Publications Policy)