

**Rusper Parish Council**



Working with and for the community

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## **Communications Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

Effective communication is essential for the transparency, reputation, and responsiveness of Rusper Parish Council. This policy sets out how the council communicates internally and externally, ensuring information is accurate, timely, lawful, and respectful.

### **2. Purpose and Objectives**

2.1 The aims of this policy are to:

- Facilitate clear and consistent communication with residents, partners, and the media.
- Ensure the Council speaks with one voice through authorised channels.
- Encourage community engagement while protecting the integrity and reputation of the Council.
- Delegate communication responsibilities effectively and lawfully.

### **3. Methods of Communication**

3.1 The Council communicates through various channels, including:

- Parish Council Website – Primary location for agendas, minutes, policies, and news.
- Noticeboards – For statutory notices and meeting schedules.
- Email – Used for formal correspondence via official addresses.
- Social Media – Used for announcements and community updates.
- Parish Newsletter / Magazine – For wider community engagement.
- Public Meetings – Offering opportunities for dialogue and participation.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

### 4.1 Full Council

- Approves this policy and any major communication strategy.
- Retains responsibility for communication decisions on major issues affecting the parish.

### 4.2 Clerk to the Council (Proper Officer)

- Acts as the main point of contact for all official communications.
- Manages the Council's website, noticeboards, and public responses.
- Issues press releases on behalf of the Council.
- Responds to public or media enquiries within their delegated authority

### 4.3 Chair of the Council

- May speak publicly on behalf of the Council with the Clerk's coordination.
- Works with the Clerk to respond to urgent media or public issues.

### 4.4 Councillors

- Must not issue official statements without prior approval.
- May communicate with constituents but must avoid misrepresenting council policy.
- Are expected to act respectfully and in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

## **5. Social Media Use**

### 5.1 When using social media in an official capacity:

- Posts must be factual, non-political, and in line with council policies.
- Offensive or defamatory content will not be tolerated.
- Personal accounts must not be used for official business unless specifically authorised.

## **6. Confidentiality and Data Protection**

6.1 All communications must:

- Respect confidentiality where appropriate.
- Comply with the UK GDPR and the Council's Data Protection Policy.
- Avoid sharing personal or sensitive data without proper authority.

## **7. Delegation Under LGA 1972 s101**

7.1 The Council delegates responsibility for day-to-day communications and media handling to the Clerk, who acts as the Proper Officer, under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972. This includes:

- Publishing council information.
- Managing communications platforms.
- Responding to general enquiries.
- Escalating significant issues to the Chair or Council as necessary.

## **8. Public Engagement and Feedback**

8.1 The Council welcomes feedback and aims to:

- Acknowledge communications promptly.
- Provide timely and accurate responses.
- Encourage participation in meetings and consultations.

## **9. Review and Adoption**

9.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if required by legislative changes or council decision.

**Adopted:**