

Draft

Chadlington Parish Council Communications Policy

Introduction

Each Parish Councillor has a duty to represent, without bias, the interests of the whole community.

They will always try and do their best and are available to help parishioners regarding matters relating to Chadlington Parish Council.

Parish Councillors may be contacted via the Clerk or using their Parish Council email addresses.

If it is felt by the resident that the matter is important, then a letter or email to the Parish Clerk will ensure that it is dealt with in a timely and professional manner (also see the Correspondence section below).

It is the Parish Council's intention to meet the timescales detailed below but there could be occasions when this is not possible. When this happens the Parish Council will review their procedures and where necessary make changes to the policy or procedures.

Aims

- To establish clear, easy to use channels of communication between the Parish Council and Parishioners, and vice versa, and between Councillors/Clerk.
- To provide information on important matters in a timely manner so as to facilitate and encourage informed comment from interested individuals and groups.

Parish Council Meetings

- The council meets on a bi-monthly basis, and if required holds additional planning meetings as needed.
- The Parish Council will normally meet in the Memorial Hall. If the Council holds a meeting in another location this will be advertised on the noticeboard and website.
- Members of the public wishing to address the Council during the formal meeting will be given an opportunity to do so. As per our Standing Orders, the public participation section will not exceed 15 minutes, and an individual may speak for up to three minutes.

Notice Board

The following items will be displayed on the Parish Council noticeboard at crossroads near Café de la Post.

- Contact details for the Clerk
- A list of councillors
- A list of the meeting dates for the year

- The Parish Council's meeting agenda - which will be posted at least 3 clear days in advance of each meeting.
- Parish Council meeting minutes – which will be posted in draft form as soon as is practicable after the meeting.
- Planning application notices
- Other items and notices from the Parish Council, and also on behalf of the District and County Councils.

The information displayed on the Parish Notice Board will be kept up to date.

Correspondence

All correspondence relating to the Parish should be addressed to the Parish Clerk in the first instance either via email at clerk@chadlingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk or via post. This will ensure that the matter is recorded and passed to the relevant person as soon as is practicably possible.

However, all Parish Councillors have their own Council email addresses which have the format firstname.lastname@chadlingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk, and residents are encouraged to contact councillors who may be able to act as an advocate for them at council meetings, for example requesting items for the agenda.

If a resident would like an issue to be discussed by full council, this needs to be raised with a councillor, who can then request a motion on the next full council agenda. The Parish Clerk is not able to action agenda requests from the public.

Correspondence to the Parish Clerk will usually be acknowledged within five working days of receipt if required. If email is used then an acknowledgment will be sent via email.

Correspondence will, if relevant, be noted in the Clerk's report, or may be included as a motion on the agenda if appropriate.

Councillors will be notified of correspondence, either at the next Parish Council meeting or before depending on the nature of the correspondence, but the addressee will not be named on minutes of meetings unless the addressee is part of an organisation and it is relevant to do so. Senders details will not be circulated to councillors without consent, unless the sender is communicating on behalf of an organisation.

Anonymous correspondence in any form will not be acknowledged or recorded.

Email should be thought of in the same way as a letter. A subject line, the sender's name and the content should be in the main body of the email, not as an attachment. Attachments will not be opened unless the Clerk has prior knowledge of the subject.

The Council regrets that, for reasons of computer security and virus protection, anonymous emails and those with no subject in the title will not be opened or actioned.

Correspondence, including emails, will be disposed of in line with the Document Storage, Retention and Destruction Policy. This policy will be followed by officers and members.

Freedom of information Requests

Freedom of Information requests will be dealt with as detailed in the Requests for Information Policy.

Website

The Parish Clerk will arrange for the agenda and associated papers to be posted on the Parish Council Website, www.chadlington-pc.org.uk at least three clear days before the meeting and for the draft Minutes to be posted as soon as possible after the meeting. The final Minutes will be posted once approved.

The website will have the following as required by the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including:

- Agendas, meeting papers and minutes
- AGAR, internal audit reports, external audit report
- Budget and precept
- Policies, procedures and risk assessments
- Councillor information

The Parish Clerk is the Webmaster for the Parish Council website.

The Parish Clerk will ensure that the Parish Council email address is publicised.

Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting is convened by the Chairman of the Parish Council and is generally held in April each year to provide parishioners with a summary of the activities of the Parish Council over the previous year and the opportunity to debate local issues and celebrate local events and activities.

Related policies and procedures

- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Document Storage, Retention and Destruction Policy
- Freedom of Information Scheme
- Habitual and Vexatious Complaints Policy
- Press and Media Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Requests for Information Policy