

Policy D2

Dissemination of information to Councillors and Employees

Adopted 2017, reviewed 2018, February 2019, July 2022

The Council provides an email address for Councillors and employees to support the goals and objectives of the Council.

Most correspondence received by the Council is by email and the Clerk will judge which of these should be forwarded to Councillors which are relevant Council business.

Councillors and employees must ensure that:

- All correspondence comply with current legislation and in accordance with current Data Protection and Freedom of Information regulations.
- These are written in clear concise language and care must be taken with email addresses and 'reply' and 'reply all' options and that they might be required for Freedom of Information requests.
- They do not consist of multiple subjects or place the Council in unnecessary business risks by misuse of the internet.
- Standing Orders and Financial Regulations stipulate that the Clerk is responsible for dealing with all Council correspondence and the RFO for finance. All correspondence, therefore, should be via the Clerk.

It is unacceptable for a Councillor to:

- Lobby in writing with regard to forthcoming meetings Council business, Council meetings being the forum for such discussions.
- Use the email to break into the Council's or another organisation's systems for the unauthorised use of a password or access to a mailbox or introduce any form of virus or malware into the network.
- Use Council communications for personal business or views on social, business or political matters or for transmitting unsolicited commercial or advertising material.
- Disseminate or store images that might be illegal or considered obscene, pornographic or abusive so as to bring the Council into disrepute.
- Forward confidential information to outside bodies or violate copyrighted information.
- Use it to deliberately and persistently waste staff time.

- All Councillors must also maintain the security of physical and electronic documents. This includes the secure disposal of documents and the use of a firewall and antivirus on electronic devices as appropriate. The Council has a paper shredder available for use by Councillors.
- Documents marked “not for publication” must not be shared or discussed, with Councillors complying with the Local Government Act 1972.

Monitoring

- The Council’s email resource is a valuable business tool designed for Council purposes. The Council or its appointed IT advisors, therefore, reserve the right to inspect any recorded data or the content of any correspondence for misuse or that can have a negative impact on Council business or its reputation.
- Your Parish Council correspondence may also be examined and released under the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- Any Councillor who has failed to comply with this Policy will face review by the Council and any employee will be subject to the Council’s disciplinary procedures.