

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

It is essential that all communications are dealt with promptly, efficiently and positively. The Parish Council are very keen to hear parishioners' comments and are committed to ensuring comments/information contribute to continuous service improvement. Important information about areas of improvement can be obtained both from a single communication and from a pattern.

Electronic Communication

The normal first point of contact for the Parish Council is the Parish Clerk. The Clerk's duties include the day to day running of events. All emails from outside the Parish Council should normally be addressed to the office clerk@berryfieldspc.org this email address to be listed in all communications from the Parish Council, on website and letterhead.

Depending on their nature enquiries this will either be answered by the Clerk or a holding email will be sent and the email will be forwarded to the relevant Councillor(s). The Councillor will respond as soon as practicable and will send their response to the Clerk who will send it on their behalf from the Parish Council office.

If the Clerk believes that the matter should be referred to the full council, the correspondent will be advised that this needs to be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting and placed on the agenda.

Written Communications

All written communications should normally be received through the Office (Berryfields Parish Council's registered address). All responses to such communications should be made via the Office. If the Clerk believes that the matter should be referred to the full council, they will advise that this has to be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting and placed on the agenda.

When individual Councillors receive direct communications from Parishioners on any matter, which are within the remit of the Parish Council they should forward a copy to the Clerk or, in the case of verbal communications that require a response, ensure that the Clerk is informed.

In responding to any communications from Parishioners, Councillors should make it clear that they are giving their personal views unless it is a matter on which the Council already has agreed Policy.

No Councillor may commit the Council to any course of action which has not been discussed, agreed and minuted by a meeting of the Council.

Reports for the Council/Agenda Items

In the case that an individual Councillor wishes to send out a report prior to a Parish Meeting this should be sent via the Clerk. Agenda items are to be sent 7 working days prior to the meeting. This will then ensure that all information is correct and placed on the agenda. (Legal requirement is for three clear days' public notice for Council meetings and 5 clear days' for Annual Council & Parish Meeting, good practice gives one week's notice if possible for all meetings). Reports are not required for all agenda items, i.e. normal updates.

Press & Media

The Parish Council may from time to time produce a Press Release on the basis of the Council's agreed policy or action. Any such Press Release must be agreed by the relevant Councillor, the Chairman, the Clerk, and where relevant the Council's legal advisor.

Press Releases will give details of who is to be contacted for further information; this will normally be the Clerk plus one or more Councillors.

Any other approach from the media must be referred to the Clerk. Ask the journalist or person calling their name and number and pass on to the Clerk. Give the Journalist the Clerk's contact details. The Clerk may then contact the relevant Councillor(s) for assistance in framing a response.

All agreed Press Releases will be circulated to Councillors for information prior to being submitted to the media.

Councillors are free to express personal views via letters to the press, comments on websites and via social media but in all cases should make it clear that they are expressing a personal view and not the policy of the Council.