

Papplewick Parish Council



Communication and Involvement Strategy and Policy

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1. Introduction

This strategy is based on the guiding principles that communication must be effective and that protocols should be followed to ensure clarity and professionalism. The strategy covers both internal and external communications. The Council aims to be transparent in its dealings and for communications to be timely and effective.

2. Objectives

The Council aims to reach everyone who has an interest in the parish, be it that they live, work or visit the village. It is important that we are able to effectively communicate with anyone who is interested and may want to become involved in influencing the future of the parish. These people include:

- Village residents
- Community groups and organisations
- Agencies and partners (including the local police)
- Local school
- County Councillors
- The local MP
- Local businesses and employers
- Voluntary groups
- Local media
- Workers

3. The Role of Councillors, Chairman and Clerk

Councillors represent the community in which they live and are governed by a Code of Conduct which encourages open, informed, timely and courteous communication at all times. Our aim is to keep all with whom we come into contact informed of our actions and to encourage stakeholders to actively participate in influencing the future of the parish.

The Clerk is the executive of the Council. As such, the Clerk should receive all communications which ought to be formally brought to the attention of the Council and should issue all formal communications made by the Council.

Councillors should immediately refer any complaints or concerns relating to their conduct or the Council received from residents to the Clerk.

Councillors should make it clear in all interactions with residents the press or third parties that they have no authority to represent the Council's view unless the matter has been agreed at a Council meeting or they have been given specific mandate to do so at a council meeting.

It is important not to raise the expectations of the residents before a matter has been debated and agreed at a Council meeting.

Unless otherwise specified the Chairman should comply with this protocol in the same way as other councillors.

4. General Rules of Communication

It is important that all Council communications are effective and in so doing must be:

- Short and to the point
- Courteous
- In plain English
- Based on facts and information
- In a consistent format and style
- Clear about the action required or taken
- Informative

5. Methods of Communication

The Council will use a variety of methods of communication based on what reaches its intended audience most effectively and efficiently. Over 80% of the population generally use electronic communication now (*Office for National Statistics*), so this is the Council's preferred and primary method of communication.

However, we recognise that not all people are able to or wish to use electronic methods of communication, so we will continue to utilise different media and approaches in order to reach our audiences.

The table below shows our main means of communication.

Council Website	The Council website is a primary method for general communication with our stakeholders. This is an area that is scheduled to be overhauled in 2025 due to migrating over to a .gov.uk domain. At this point, Papplewick Parish Council will publicise its existence which needs to be more widely used by the general public. The website must be kept up to date and we want to include information on activities and news on an ongoing basis, as well as provide details of the Council's policies and procedures. We also need more links to other websites offering information considered to be of interest to our stakeholders.
Clerk's contact details	Email: clerk.papplewick@gmail.com
Council notice boards	The noticeboards are updated regularly with important information about the Council's activities and events.
Council Agendas and Minutes	Agendas of Council meetings are available to all on the website and on the council notice boards. Minutes are on the website and are available on request by email.

Council meetings	All Council meetings are publicised and are open to the public to attend. There is a short period at the start of each Council meeting where the Council are able hear issues raised by members of the public. This is a very important part of our communication strategy. Members of the public are then welcome to stay and hear the rest of the meeting.
Annual Parish Meeting	The annual parish meeting is held in March every year and provides an opportunity to communicate and discuss Council activities over the past year and objectives for the following year.
Press Releases	Press releases are given to local media on significant points of interest or achievement.
Councillor's Representation and Networking	We are committed to regular involvement with local groups and organisations through representation.
Facebook	The Parish Council is closely associated to Papplewick's Community Facebook page. This Facebook page is for sharing news, events and promoting the work of the Parish Council and other community events in the area.
Instagram	As with Facebook, we are looking to be part of a community run Instagram page, to try to encourage younger residents to become involved in the Parish Council.
External Correspondence	We will reply to external correspondence in a timely manner which is both courteous and compliant with the General Rules of Communication (see above).
Internal Correspondence	Email is the primary tool for formal communication for the parish council. It should be used for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official correspondence between councillors, employees, and residents. • Sharing documents, agendas, minutes, and other official council information such as expense claims and planning application sign off • Maintaining records in compliance with the council's record-keeping obligations.
WhatsApp	Councillors and the Clerk have an informal WhatsApp group which is used for informal discussions related to council activities, such as coordination of events, meetings, and site visits.
Leaflet Drops / Newsletters	Arrangements are made between Councillors and volunteers to manually drop newsletters. A distribution plan is used to agree who is delivering to which area.