

## **RYHALL PARISH COUNCIL POLICY ON COMMUNICATIONS**

### **RELATING TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, OTHER AGENCIES, FELLOW MEMBERS, THE PRESS AND PARISH COUNCIL STAFF**

#### 1. Correspondence/Information to the Parish Council

- (i) The point of contact for the Parish Council is the Clerk, and it is to the Clerk that all correspondence for the Parish Council should be addressed.
- (ii) The Clerk should deal with all correspondence following a meeting.
- (iii) No individual Councillor should be the sole custodian of any correspondence or information in the name of the Parish Council, a committee, sub-committee or working party.

#### 2. Agenda Items for Council, Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Parties

Agenda items should be clear and concise. They should contain sufficient information for members to make an informed decision.

Items for information should be kept to a minimum on Council agendas.

Where members wish fellow members to receive matters for "information only", this information should be circulated via the Parish Clerk.

#### 3. Communications with the Press and Public

Press reports from the Parish Council, Committees, Working Parties etc should be from the Clerk or an officer or via the reporter's own attendance at a meeting.

Members who are asked for comment by the press or members of the public, should ask that it be clearly reported that it is their personal view. Councillors shall not, in their official capacity, provide oral or written statements or articles to the press or other media. Best practice is for the Chairman to answer on behalf of the Parish Council

If Members have a complaint or receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be presented to the Clerk in written format, to be dealt with under the complaints procedure, or via a Parish Council agenda item. The person's name and address should be on record.

If the press asks questions of the Parish Council as a whole then the Parish Clerk will initially deal with the matter, keeping the Chairman informed. Any formal Press Release has to have the approval of the Chairman or in his absence the Vice Chairman

#### 4. Councillor Correspondence to Other Agencies

- (i) All personal correspondence as a Parish Councillor to other agencies should make it clear that the views are the expression of the personal opinions of the writer and not necessarily those of the Parish/Town Council.
- (ii) A copy of all outgoing correspondence relating to the Parish Council or one's role within it should be sent to the Clerk, and it be noted on the correspondence, eg "copy to the Clerk" so that the recipient is aware that the Clerk has been advised.

5. Communications with Parish Council Staff

(i) Telephone calls should be:

- kept to a minimum
- appropriate to the work of the Parish Council

(ii) E-mails

- e-mails should be kept to a minimum
- use of the generic parish council email for all council related communications
- instant replies should not be expected from the Clerk, reasons for urgency should be stated
- matters for information to the other councillors should normally be directed via the Clerk
- e-mails to other agencies should be copied to the Clerk when deemed applicable
- Members should acknowledge their e-mails when requested to do so.

(iii) Meetings with the Clerk or other Officers:-

- Where possible an appointment should be made
- Meeting should be relevant to the work of the Council
- Members should be clear about the matters they wish to discuss

**Approved at the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021 – minute reference 2021/07/09**