Chignal parish council

Publication policy

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| Version 1 | Clerk - WAG | 14.04.2021 |
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Publication Policy

1. Parish Council Correspondence

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.  The Clerk should deal with all correspondence following a meeting. No individual Parish Councillor should be the sole custodian of any correspondence or information in the name of the Parish Council (or its committees/sub-committees).  [In particular, Parish Councillors do not have a right to obtain confidential information/documentation unless they can demonstrate a “need to know”.] All official correspondence should be sent by the Clerk in the name of the Parish Council, using Council letter-headed paper.   Where correspondence from the Clerk to a Councillor is copied to another person, the addressee should be made aware that a copy is being forwarded to that other person. Correspondence sent on behalf of the Parish Council to the Borough Council shall also be copied to the two Ward Councillors.

2. Parish Councillor Correspondence with External Parties

The Clerk sends out the Council’s correspondence to other bodies and correspondence from individual Parish Councillors should be avoided; however, there may be exceptional situations when it is appropriate for a Parish Councillor to issue correspondence in his/her own name. Such correspondence must be authorised by the Parish Council and the correspondence must make it clear that it has been written in an official capacity and has been authorised.

3. Communications with the Press and Public

In accordance with Standing Order No. 27, all requests from the press or other media, for an oral or written statement, or comment from the Council shall be processed in accordance with the Council’s policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.  In the absence of a policy, Councillors shall not, in their official capacity, provide oral or written statements or written articles to the press or other media.

If the following provisions are agreed, this will require an appropriate amendment to the Standing Orders to stipulate that the Chairman or Vice-Chairman, or an individual Parish Councillor in specific circumstances, is authorised to speak on behalf of the Parish Council.

The Clerk will clear all press reports, or comments to the media, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council or the Chairman of the relevant committee/sub-committee.

Press reports from the Parish Council, its committees or working groups shall, in general, be sent from the Clerk or via the reporter’s own attendance at a meeting.

In addition to the Clerk, the Chairman or, in her absence, the Vice-Chairman, shall be authorised to speak to representatives of the media in respect of Parish Council matters.

Unless a Parish Councillor has been authorised by the Council to speak to the media on a particular issue, Parish Councillors who are asked for comment by the press should make it clear that it is a personal view and ask that it be clearly reported as their personal view.

Unless a Parish Councillor is absolutely certain that he/she is reporting the view of the Council, they must make it clear to members of the public that they are expressing a personal view.  [The only clear way of being aware of the Council’s view is if the matter has been discussed at a Parish Council meeting, and a decision made on that item.]

4. Agendas for Parish Council Meetings

In accordance with Paragraph 1 (4) (a) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, agendas will be published no later than 3 clear days before a meeting (this excludes the day of publication and the day of the meeting – Saturdays are included within this calculation).

Where the Clerk or a Parish Councillor wishes fellow councillors to receive matters “for information only” this will be circulated via the Clerk.