

## **COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL/GUIDELINES**

### **Background**

A priority for the Council, is to interact with the community as best possible, in order that its business reflects the wishes of local people. Inevitably, this leads to a greater volume of communications received.

### **Purpose**

To offer guidelines to Councillors on how to respond to random communications received.

### **Definitions**

Random communications include emails, notice of planning applications, letters, messages including those by word of mouth, telephone calls, face to face conversations etc, with members of the public & others.

### **Objective**

To avoid misunderstandings, to expedite matters, to ensure the efficient & consistent running of the Council & to gain public confidence in the way the Council is run.

### **Practice**

It is always good practice to acknowledge incoming communications in writing, ideally, to state any actions you propose to take, based on agreement with the person making a request/enquiry.

Councillors should feel free to answer queries where they feel able to do so, but they must ensure the response given is copied to the Chair & Clerk, or to the whole Council as appropriate.

Where a Councillor feels unable to answer a query, they should advise the person making the enquiry of their intentions & refer to the Chair & Clerk.

The Chair, must decide whether the matter is put on the next agenda, or whether to delegate (including to themselves). The Clerk, should be informed & make a note accordingly.

Councillors are advised that conversations, which consist of anything contentious, should be recorded.

Caution is advised when putting anything into writing including email communications.

PGW September 2023

## **GUIDANCE NOTES FOR THE CO-OPTION OF PARISH COUNCILLORS**

### **Shillingford Parish Council**

Firstly, the Council should consider whether there is a need to recruit to a vacancy. The appointing officer must be identified, usually the chair. Assuming co-option is the agreed way forward, the Council has to decide what skills, attributes & knowledge are needed for the position. Ideally, such considerations are guided by a proforma which outlines the range of skills ordinarily needed in order that the Parish Council functions effectively. Even if such a document exists, it may not be up to date or relevant. If so, the current needs of the Council should drive the skills being sought in order to complement those of existing Councillors. .

The above should form the basis for any publicity, informal conversations with potential candidates & interview questions to ensure consistency.

The vacant position should be advertised locally, using the Parish Magazine (Country News) & village Notice Boards. DALC should also be advised of the vacancy. Publicity should refer briefly to the skills required for the position, how further information can be obtained & the need to submit a short personal statement outlining why an applicant believes they are suitable. There should be a deadline stated for submission of statements & reference to all applicants being called for a short, informal interview.

Interview questions should be the same for all applicants & reflect the attributes and (ideally) skills the Council is looking for.

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