
Twigworth Parish Council

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY



Adopted by Council: 9th May 2024

COMMUNICATION POLICY

Policy Statement

To establish clear, easy to use channels of communication between the Parish Council and the Parishioners, and vice versa.

To provide information on important matters in an appropriate manner to facilitate and encourage informed comment from interested individuals and groups.

Twigworth Parish Council aims to be an open and transparent Council who listen to their electorate and try to make a difference to their community within its power and financial constraints.

Introduction

Each Parish Councillor has a duty to represent, without bias, the interest of the whole community.

They will endeavour to do their best and are available to help parishioners with regard to matters relating to the parish of Twigworth.

They may be contacted by email or telephone and a contact list is displayed on the Parish Council noticeboards around the village as well as the Parish Council Website.

If the matter is important, then contact the Parish Clerk by letter or email to ensure that the matter is brought before the Parish Council and dealt with in a suitable and professional manner.

Parish Councillors

Parish Councillors are there to listen and represent the views of the community.

Parish Councillors are provided with an official Parish Council email address which is used for all Council communications.

Parish Council Meetings

The Parish Council will normally meet at 7.00pm on the first Thursday every two months at the Down Hatherley Village Hall; confirmation of this is posted on the Council website.

The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will be the May meeting when Councillors will elect the Chair and appoint the Vice Chair for the forthcoming year.

The Annual Parish Meeting (a meeting of the electorate) will take place in May each year.

The Parish Council will meet in Down Hatherley Village Hall, unless otherwise notified.

A 10-minute discussion period for parishioners will be held near the beginning of the Parish Council Meeting.

Press Relations

Normally only the Parish Clerk and Chair issue press releases and comments to the local media, however when Parish Councillors provide information to the local media it needs to be made clear whether they are speaking on behalf of the Parish Council or as individuals.

Involvement In Partnerships

Where appropriate the Parish Council has and will continue to liaise with other various organisations such as neighbouring parishes, Borough, City and County Councils, Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council, Police safety teams etc.

Noticeboards

The following items will be displayed:

- (i) Parish Councillors with contact details
- (ii) Parish Council meeting dates for the year Notice of the annual audited accounts will be displayed when appropriate
- (iii) The Parish Council meeting notice will be displayed at least five days in advance of the meeting
- (iv) Notices for Parishioners will be displayed as and when appropriate

Parish Magazine

The Clerk or Chair will provide Council updates for the Twigworth News (Newsletter), normally published monthly but as appropriate.

Appropriate notices will be published as and when required.

Social Media Networking

The Parish Council has a Facebook page “Twigworth Parish Council” which is managed by the Lead Councillor for Community Affairs, who has delegated authority to issue updates and news on behalf of the Parish Council.

The Lead Councillor can share news and information to the wider parish audience through the Facebook Page “Twigworth Parish Council”.

Members of staff or Parish Councillors using social networking through their personal or professional lives must not comment on the activities of the Parish Council to ensure that the Code of Conduct is not breached.

The Parish Clerk will monitor the Parish Council’s social media channels but constant monitoring is not possible and the Clerk will not be able to reply individually to all messages or comments received.

However, the Clerk will endeavour to ensure that any emerging themes or helpful suggestions are passed to the relevant people or authorities.

In order to ensure that all discussions on the Council page are productive, respectful and consistent with the Parish Council's aims and objectives, please follow these guidelines:

- (i) Be considerate and respectful of others. Vulgarity, threats or abusive language will not be tolerated
- (ii) Differing opinions and discussion of diverse ideas are encouraged, but personal attacks on anyone, including the Councillors or staff, will not be permitted
- (iii) Share freely and be generous with official Parish Council posts but be aware of copyright laws; be accurate and give credit where credit is due
- (iv) Stay on topic
- (v) Refrain from using the Council's Facebook page for commercial purposes or to advertise market or sell products
- (vi) Sending a message/post via Facebook or Twitter will not be considered as contacting the Council for official purposes and we will not be obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through these channels
- (vii) Instead, please contact the Parish Clerk and/or Councillors by emailing direct

The Council retains the right to remove comments or content that includes:

- (i) Obscene or racist content
- (ii) Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- (iii) Potentially libellous statements
- (iv) Plagiarised material; any material in violation of any laws, including copyright
- (v) Private, personal information published without consent
- (vi) Information or links unrelated to the content of the page
- (vii) Commercial promotions or spam

The Parish Council's response to any communication received not meeting the above criteria will be to either ignore, inform the sender of the policy or send a brief response as appropriate.

This will be at the Council's discretion based on the message received, given our limited resources available.

Any information posted on the Facebook page not in line with the above criteria will be removed as quickly as practically possible.

Repeat offenders will be blocked from the Facebook page.

The Council may post a statement that 'A post breaching the Council's Social Media Policy has been removed'.

If the post alleges a breach of a Council's policy or the law the person who posted it will be asked to submit a formal complaint to the Council or report the matter to the Police as soon as possible to allow due process.