

Kempsey Parish Council

Communications Policy

Document revisions

Revision	Description	Adopted
2.1.0	Communications Policy update, approved and adopted	01/05/2013

Communications Policy Index

[1.Kempsey Parish Council Communications Policy.....4](#)
[2.Agenda Items for Parish Council, Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Parties.....4](#)
[3.Communications with the Press and Public.....5](#)
[4.Councillor Correspondence to External Parties5](#)
[5.Communications with Parish Council Staff.....6](#)

1. Kempsey Parish Council Communications Policy

- a. Kempsey Parish Council's objective is to achieve clear accurate and consistent communication with all of those with whom it deals. The point of contact for the Parish Council is the Clerk as the Parish Council's Proper Officer, and it is to the Clerk that all correspondence for the Parish Council, its Committees, Sub-Committees or Working Parties should be addressed.
- b. No individual Councillor or Officer shall be the sole custodian of any correspondence or information in the name of Kempsey Parish Council, its Committees, Sub-Committee or Working Parties.
- c. Any correspondence received, including correspondence addressed to the Parish Council, its Committees, Sub-Committees or Working Parties, will be placed on a Parish Council agenda in accordance with Kempsey Parish Council Standing Orders.
- d. A copy of correspondence that forms part of an agenda of the Parish Council, its Committees, Sub-Committees or Working Parties will be made available at that Council, Committee, Sub-committee or Working Party meeting.
- e. A copy of correspondence will be made available to a Parish Councillor upon request and in accordance with the Council's Document Retention Policy.
- f. The Proper Officer should deal with all correspondence following a meeting, unless it has been agreed otherwise.
- g. All official written correspondence from the Parish Council, its Committees, Sub-Committees or Working Parties should be sent by the Proper Officer using Parish Council letter headed paper.
- h. All official e-mails from the Parish Council, its Committees, Sub-Committees or Working Parties will be sent by the Proper Officer from the Parish Councils registered email address.
- i. Where correspondence from the Proper Officer to a Councillor is copied to another person, the addressee should be made aware that a copy is being forwarded to that other person (e.g. copy to XX).

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

- a. Agenda should be clear and concise. They should contain sufficient information to enable Councillors to make an informed decision, and for a member of public to understand what matters are being considered and what decisions are to be taken at a meeting.
- b. Items for information should be kept to a minimum on an agenda.
- c. Where the Proper Officer or a Councillor wishes fellow Councillors to receive matters for "information only", this information will be circulated via the Proper Officer.

3. Communications with the Press and Public

- a. The Proper Officer will clear all press reports, or comments to the media, with the Chairman of the Parish Council or Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council or the Chairman of the relevant committee. A copy of all press reports and comments to the media will be sent to Parish Councillors at the first opportunity.
- b. Press reports from the Parish Council, its Committees, Sub Committees or Working Parties should be from the Proper Officer or via the reporter's own attendance at a meeting.
- c. Unless a Councillor has been authorised by the Parish Council to speak to the media on a particular issue, 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.
- d. Unless a Councillor is absolutely certain that he/she is reporting the view of the Parish Council, they must make it clear to members of the public that they are expressing a personal view.
- e. If Councillors receive a complaint from a member of the public, it will be dealt with in accordance with the Parish Council's Complaints Procedure.
- f. Notwithstanding its general intention set out in 1(a), in the event of the Proper Officer being on annual leave, on sick leave or in an emergency situation, the Council authorises the Parish Council Chairman or Vice-Chairman and one of the Committee Chairperson to make a delegated decision on such communications with the Press as they jointly deemed to be appropriate on behalf of the Parish Council.
- g. Notwithstanding the general intention set out in 1(d), emails may be sent in the delegated circumstances defined in 3(f) from their private email address, but the email must include in the email body the title "On Behalf Of Kempsey Parish Council". Such delegated decisions will be reported to the next meeting of the Parish Council and a copy of the communication sent to the Proper Officer and Parish Councillors.
- h. The Proper Officer will ensure a copy of all correspondence with, but not limited to, County & District Councillors, County & District Officers, external parties and members of the public, be retained in accordance with the Councils Document Retention Policy.

4. Councillor Correspondence to External Parties

- a. As the Proper Officer should be sending **most** of the Parish Council's correspondence from a Councillor to other bodies, it needs to be made clear that it is written in their official capacity and has been authorised by the Parish Council.
- b. A copy of all outgoing correspondence relating to the Parish Council or a Councillor's role within it, should be sent to the Proper Officer, and it be noted on the correspondence, e.g. "copy to the clerk" so that the recipient is aware that the Proper Officer has been advised.
- c. No member of Kempsey Parish Council will issue a communication of any type which would appear to commit the Parish Council to any course of action.

5. Communications with Parish Council Staff

- a. Councillors must not give instructions to any member of staff, unless authorised to do so, or as part of a Committee or Sub-Committee with delegated powers.
- b. No individual Councillor, regardless of whether or not they are the Chair of the Parish Council, the Chair of a Committee or other meeting, or are styled “Leader” of the Parish Council, may give instructions to the Proper Officer or to another employee which are inconsistent or conflict with Parish Council decisions or arrangements for delegated power.
- c. Telephone calls and any electronic communications should be appropriate to the work of the Parish Council.
- d. E-mails:
 - i. Instant replies should not be expected from the Proper Officer; reasons for urgency should be stated;
 - ii. Information to Councillors should normally be directed via the Proper Officer;
 - iii. E-mails from Councillors to external parties should be copied to the Proper Officer;
 - iv. Councillors should acknowledge their e-mails when requested to do so.
- e. Meetings with the Proper Officer or other officers:
 - i. Wherever possible an appointment should be made;
 - ii. Meetings should be relevant to the work of that particular officer;
 - iii. Councillors should be clear that the matter is legitimate Parish Council business and not matters driven by personal or political agendas.