

The Ivers Parish Council

Communication Policy – Final

1. Introduction:

The purpose of this policy is to be used to develop effective communications with all residents of the Parish and all the Parish Council's partners including the media.

The Council has a duty to inform the public about how the annual Parish Precept is spent and, more generally, to tell residents what action it is taking on their behalf around major projects planned for the area and representing them in discussions with District and County officers and representatives.

It holds to the principle that the Parish Council should both tell people about what we do and actively listen to what people tell us about the service improvements they wish to see in The Ivers.

The Parish Council will direct residents to other agencies, councils and service providers for services not delivered by the Parish Council

Objectives:

- To inform residents and strategic partners of the priorities, objectives and activities of the Parish Council on an on-going basis.
- To encourage residents and strategic partners to be involved with the work of the Parish Council by volunteering and partnership working
- To use a range of communication methods and channels to ensure that the way in which we communicate is effective across our wide and varied audience.
- To work collaboratively with print and other media, to ensure the accurate presentation of our proposals and responses.
- To build trust by being open and transparent.

2. Focus of our communications:

2.1 A small number of key points will underpin all Parish Council communications:

- The
Parish
Council

makes a difference through delivery of services and representing the community.

- The Parish Council wants to hear the views of others and elicit constructive feedback.
- The Parish Council needs the help and active participation of the community and our partners to make improvements where they are needed and to respond to the changes in our area.
- The Parish Council will celebrate what has already happened, with positive messages focusing on what is good about living or working in the village.

3. Compliance with the relevant legislation:

3.1 The Local Government Act 1972 requires that all committee agendas are published five working days prior to the meeting by e-mail to Councillors, posted on the Parish Council notice boards and the website. Minutes are provided in hard copy **on request** and the previous 13 months are posted on the website.

3.2 The public and the media are encouraged to attend Council meetings and seating is made available. Public and media participation in a meeting is regulated by procedural standing orders.

3.3 The Council is aware of its responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and has published on its website a schedule of publications that contains all policy and procedural documents. All decisions of the Council, made in an open meeting, may be quoted and made available to the public and the media.

3.4 The Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014 which apply to England, give rights to members of the press and public to:

- see information relating to significant decisions made outside meetings by officers acting under a general or specific delegated power.
- use modern technology and communication methods such as filming, audio-recording, blogging and tweeting to report the proceedings of the public meetings of their councils and other local government bodies. If filming is to be undertaken, the Clerk needs to be informed 5 days before a meeting to ensure all necessary arrangements can be made to fulfil safeguarding obligations.
- In common with all Councils, certain agenda items are debated in a closed session of a committee meeting. The guidelines for the items that will be heard in closed session are covered by the Local Government Act 1972 and the Council's Standing Orders. The Council reserves the right to withhold certain sensitive information concerning personal information and commercial transactions, for example contracts or the purchase and sale of land and property. This applies to the Council's own commercial interests and to the various parties involved in individual business transactions with the Council. This area and other matters are guided by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the Data Protection Act 1998 and exemptions under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Council will comply with the GDPR which becomes law in 2018.

4. Vexatious requests, complaints, unreasonable or repetitious requests for information:

4.1 Sometimes councils may find themselves being called upon to respond repeatedly to an individual or group of individuals where that council has already responded to the matter (or something very similar) and has concluded that there is no further that useful that can be done. In these cases, the council will review this contact and identify if it the matter should be handled under the policy relating to managing habitual and or vexatious requests which includes responding to unreasonable behaviour (Adopted June 2017) and is not covered by this policy.

4. Communication Policy Review:

This Policy will be reviewed annually.