

CHESTERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Communication Policy

Aims

- To establish clear, easy to use channels of communication between the Parish Council and Parishioners, and vice versa.
- To provide information on important matters in a timely manner to facilitate and encourage informed comment from interested individuals and groups.

Introduction

Each Parish Councillor has a duty to represent without bias the interests of the whole community. They will always try and do their best and are available to help Parishioners regarding matters relating to the Parish of Chesterton.

Parish Councillors may be contacted via the Clerk in the first instance or in person. If you feel that the matter is important, then a letter or email to the Parish Clerk will ensure that it is dealt with in a timely and professional manner.

It is the Parish Council's intention to meet the timescales detailed below but there could be occasions when this is not possible. When this happens the Parish Council will review their procedures and where necessary make changes to the policy or procedures.

Parish Council Meetings

The Parish Council normally meets on the second Tuesday of every month, except August, and the dates are publicised on the website and the noticeboards. The Parish Council will normally meet in the Colin Board Room at Chesterton Community Centre, Geminus Road.

Public Consultation will be scheduled at each Parish Council Meeting to allow parishioners to give their views on agenda items and any other Parish-related issues.

Notice Boards

The following items will be displayed on the Parish noticeboards:

- Parish Council meeting dates for the year
- Contact details for the Clerk.
- The Parish Council's meeting agendas – which will be posted at least 3 clear working days in advance of each meeting.

The information displayed on the Parish Notice boards will be kept up to date.

Correspondence

All correspondence relating to the Parish should be addressed to the Parish Clerk in the first instance. This will ensure that the matter is recorded and passed to the relevant person or organisation as soon as practically possible.

Date agreed at Council Meeting: 1st October 2024

All correspondence to the Parish Clerk will be acknowledged within one week of receipt if possible. If email is used, then an acknowledgment will be sent via email.

Councillors will be notified of correspondence, but the addressee will not be named on minutes of meeting unless requested. Anonymous correspondence in any form will be recorded as received but not responded to.

Email should be thought of in the same way as a letter. A subject line, the sender's name and the content should be in the main body of the email, not as an attachment.

Attachments will not be opened unless the Clerk has prior knowledge of the subject. The Council regrets that, for reasons of computer security and virus protection, anonymous emails, and those with no subject in the title will not be opened or actioned.

Parishioners may raise any issue directly with the Parish Clerk or any Councillor. If a satisfactory answer cannot be given immediately the issue may be placed on the agenda for the attention of the full Council.

The Clerk will acknowledge all Freedom of Information requests within seven working days and will reply fully within 20 working days of receipt of the request. If this is not possible, a further holding letter/email will be sent with an expected completion date.

Website

The Parish Clerk will arrange for the Agenda and associated papers to be posted on the Chesterton Parish Council Website www.chestertonparishcouncil.org.uk at least three clear days before the meeting and for the draft Minutes to be posted as soon as possible after the meeting. The final Minutes will be posted once approved.

To comply with the **Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities**, the Clerk will arrange for the annual publication of the following documents no later than 1 July each year:

- a. All items of expenditure above £100
- b. End of year accounts
- c. Annual governance statement
- d. Internal audit report
- e. List of councillor or member responsibilities
- f. Minutes, agendas, and meeting papers of formal meetings.

The Parish Clerk will ensure that the Parish Council email address is publicised.

Contact details for the Parish Clerk: clerk@chestertonparishcouncil.org.uk

Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting is convened by the Chairman of the Parish Council and is generally held in May (although can be held between 1 March to 31 May) each year to provide Parishioners with a summary of the activities of the Parish Council over the previous year and the opportunity to debate local issues and celebrate local events and activities.