

Glaphorn Parish Council

COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL

This Protocol has been drawn up in accordance with the "Governance Toolkit for Parish and Parish Councils" prepared as a partner publication by the National Association of Local Councils and others; and was re-adopted by Glaphorn Parish Council on 17th November 2016.

1. Parish Council Correspondence

- a. Correspondence includes letters and emails.
- b. The point of contact for Glaphorn Parish Council is the Parish Clerk, and it is to the Parish Clerk that all correspondence for the Parish Council should be addressed.
- c. The Parish Clerk should deal with all correspondence following a meeting.
- d. No individual Councillor should be the sole custodian of any correspondence or information in the name of the Parish Council, a committee, sub-committee or working party.
- e. All official correspondence should be sent by the Parish Clerk in the name of the Parish Council using council letter headed paper.
- f. Where correspondence from the Parish Clerk to a Councillor is copied to another person, the addressee should be made aware that a copy is being forwarded to that other person.

2. Councillor Correspondence to external parties

- a. The Clerk sends out the Council's correspondence to other bodies. Correspondence from individual Parish Councillors should be avoided; however, there may be exceptional situations when it is appropriate for a Parish Councillor to issue correspondence in his/her own name. Such correspondence must be authorised by the Parish Council and the correspondence must make it clear that it has been written in an official capacity and has been authorised by the Parish Council.
- b. A copy of all outgoing correspondence relating to the council or a Councillor's role within it, should be sent to the Parish Clerk, and it be noted on the correspondence, e.g. "copy to the Clerk" so that the recipient is aware that the Clerk has been advised.

3. E-mails

- a. E-mail has replaced many traditional forms of communication, both oral and written. The writer of an e-mail must remember that their message may be stored permanently, and that there is no such thing as confidentiality in cyberspace.
- b. The Parish Clerk is a part-time worker and replies should not be expected from the Parish Clerk within three clear working days; reasons for urgency should be stated.
- c. Information to Councillors should normally be directed via the Parish Clerk.

- d. It would be helpful if councillors were to check their e-mails on a regular basis and should acknowledge their e-mails with a simple response when requested to do so, where possible within three working days.

4. Communications with the Press and Public

- a. The Parish Clerk will clear all press reports, or comments to the media, with the Chairman of the council.
- b. Press reports from the council, its committees or working parties should be from the Parish Clerk or via the reporter's own attendance at a meeting.
- c. Unless a Councillor has been authorised by the 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 reporting the view of the 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, this should be dealt with under the Council's adopted complaints procedure, and/or via a council agenda item.