

Charmouth Parish Council

Council Office The Elms St Andrew's Drive Charmouth Bridport Dorset DT6 6LN

Telephone (01297) 560826 E-Mail clerk@charmouthparishcouncil.gov.uk



Communication Policy

This strategy sets a framework for Parish Council communications. It gives direction for all media, online, internal and external communications activity undertaken by Charmouth Parish Council.

We will use the most appropriate channels of communications to reach our customers including residents, employees, businesses, contractors and public sector partners. We will use clear and easy to understand language.

Good communication is a key driver to overall satisfaction with council performance. It is also at the heart of good customer service and effective, meaningful consultation and critical to the council's role in the community.

Our Communications Objectives

- To secure and strengthen the reputation of the Parish Council
- To build and maintain a professional corporate identity
- To promote the image that the Parish Council is supportive, effective, efficient and listens to the public and their needs
- To ensure that communications are consistent and co-ordinated across all channels
- To ensure all staff understand the priorities of the Parish Council and feel valued and able to contribute to major changes affecting services they provide
- To ensure that our communications activities reflect the full diversity of the community and help ensure equality of access to all our services
- To hold an Annual Parish Meeting as an opportunity for face-to-face communication with parishioners
- To hold consultation meetings as an opportunity for dialogue on specific items
- To work with public sector partners to share good practice and explore joint working opportunities

Our Communications

- To work with public sector partners to share good practice and explore joint working opportunities
- Communications must be clear, easy to understand, polite, tasteful and relevant
- Communications must not contain content that is knowingly unlawful, libellous, defamatory, harassing, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive
- And must not contain content knowingly copied from elsewhere, for which we don't own the copyright

Letter, Email, Telephone and Texting

We communicate with residents, employees, businesses, contractors and public sector partners by letter, email, telephone and to lesser extent by texting. This type of communication is normally to a named individual but is equally as important as the broadcasting information to a wider audience.

Our offices are open most weekday mornings and we aim to reply to all correspondence sent as soon as we can. An 'out of office' message should be used when appropriate.

The Clerk is responsible for dealing with correspondence received and passing on any relevant information to councillors or external agencies.

It is essential to the smooth running of the office and the reputation of the council that all councillors inform the Clerk of any communication received or sent externally. Best practice is for draft emails and letters to be sent to the Clerk for onward dissemination, ensuring that a complete and proper record of all correspondence is kept. Please remember not to forward personal information (names and addresses) on to other people or groups outside of the Parish Council.

Social Media

The Parish Council has a Website and Facebook page which are used to provide up to date information about the Parish Council and its activities.

It is a legal requirement for the Parish Council to have a website and this should include certain information as required by the Transparency Code.

In addition, our website displays notices, agendas and minutes of all our meetings, planning applications, our policies including the Neighbourhood Plan, our amenities and news items.

Our Facebook page is used to inform interested parties of documents and news.

The Clerk moderates our website and Facebook page and oversees all updates and posts.

The Parish Council is aware of the benefits of social media but also to the dangers and as such will follow the following guidelines:-

- Not partake in political advertising or use social media for commercial purposes
- Be considerate and respectful of others. Vulgarity, personal threats or abuse of language is not tolerated
- Abide by copyright laws when sharing information
- Our social media is not monitored 24/7 and we will not always be able to reply individually to all messages or comments received. However, we will endeavour to ensure that any emerging themes or helpful suggestions are passed to the relevant people or authorities
- Please do not include personal/private information in your social media posts to us
- Sending a message/post via Facebook will not be considered as contacting the Parish Council for official purposes and we will not be obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through these channels. Instead, please make direct contact with the council by emailing
- We retain the right to remove inappropriate comments or content
- It is strongly advised that Councillors using social media in their personal capacity avoid commenting on Parish Council matters but if absolutely necessary it should be clearly stated as their personal views and not the views of Charmouth Parish Council.

Internal Communication

The Parish Council understands that ensuring that our staff know the council's plans and priorities are vitally important.

To achieve this aim the Clerk and Facilities Manager meet regularly to discuss meeting outcomes and action points. In addition, meetings with the committee chairs and staff are held to ensure that work plans are agreed and incorporated into work schedules. Staff are appraised annually and encouraged to discuss any issues with the Clerk or HR committee as they occur.

Councillors are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct and the Data Protection Act in all their work on behalf of the Council.

Adopted by Council:	Sept 2024
Last Reviewed:	
Review Due:	Sept 2027