**LITTLE ECCLESTON WITH LARBRECK PARISH COUNCIL**

**Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy**

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| **Issue No** | **Date Agreed** | **Min Ref** | **Details of Amendments** |
| 01 | March 21 | 796/21 | New Policy |
| 02 | Sept 24 | 1250/24 | General review and new email address/website added |

The use of digital and social media and electronic communication enables the Parish Council to interact in a way that improves the communications both within the Council and between the Council and the people, businesses and agencies it works with and serves.

The Council has a website and uses email to communicate. The Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications. Over time the Council may add to the channels of communication that it uses as it seeks to improve and expand the services it delivers. When these changes occur, this Policy will be updated to reflect the new arrangements.

Communications from the Council will meet the following criteria:

* Be civil, tasteful and relevant.
* Not contain content that is knowingly unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive.
* Not contain content knowingly copied from elsewhere, for which we do not own the copyright.
* Not contain any personal information.

**Parish Council Website**

Where necessary, we may direct those contacting us to our website to see the required information, or we may forward their question to one of our Councillors for consideration and response. We may not respond to every email we receive particularly if we are experiencing a heavy workload.

**Parish Council Facebook Page**

The Parish Council does not administer a facebook page and does not use this method of communication with residents.

**Twitter Account**

The Parish Council does not administer a twitter account and does not use this method to communicate with residents.

**Parish Council Email**

The Clerk to the council has their own council email address.

The email account is monitored during office hours, periodically throughout the week Monday to Friday, and we aim to reply to all questions sent as soon as we can. An ‘out of office’ message is used as the clerk is employed part time (currently 6.5 hours per week).

The Clerk is responsible for dealing with email received and passing on any relevant mail to members or external agencies for information and/or action. All communications on behalf of the Council will usually come from the Clerk, and/or otherwise will always be copied to the Clerk.

All Councillors have Parish Council email addresses. Individual Councillors are at liberty to communicate directly with parishioners in relation to their own personal views, if appropriate, copy to the Clerk.

These procedures will ensure that a complete and proper record of all correspondence is kept.

Do not forward personal information on to other people or groups outside of the Council, this includes names, addresses, email, IP addresses and cookie identifiers.

**SMS**

The Parish Council does not use SMS as a method to communicate with Councillors or residents.

**Video Conferencing**

The Parish Council uses Microsoft Teams as its method of holding virtual meetings where permitted by legislation.

**Internal communication and access to information within the Council**

The Council is continually looking at ways to improve its working and the use of electronic communications is a major factor in delivering improvement.

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

As more and more information becomes available at the press of a button, it is vital that all information is treated sensitively and securely. Councillors are expected to maintain an awareness of the confidentiality of information that they have access to and not to share confidential information with anyone. Failure to properly observe confidentiality may be seen as a breach of the Council’s Code of Conduct and will be dealt with through its prescribed procedures (at the extreme it may also involve a criminal investigation).

Members should also be careful only to cc essential recipients on emails i.e. to avoid use of the ‘Reply to All’ option, if at all possible, but of course copying in all who need to know and ensuring that email trails have been removed.

CONTACT DETAILS AND WEBSITE

Website: lewlparishcouncil.gov.uk

Clerks email: parishclerk@lewlparishcouncil.gov.uk