

FISKERTON CUM MORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Electronic Communication Policy.

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.

The Council from time to time contributes to social media pages which are intended to provide information and updates regarding activities and opportunities within our Parish and promote our community positively.

Communications from the Council will meet the following criteria:

- Be civil, tasteful and relevant;
- Not contain content that is knowingly unlawful, libellous, harassing (sexually or otherwise), bullying, 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.
- If it is official Council business it will be moderated by either the Chair/Vice Chair of the Council or the Clerk to the Council;
- Social media will not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising.

In order to ensure that all discussions on any comments relating to Council posts are productive, respectful and consistent with the Council's aims and objectives, we ask you to follow these guidelines:

- Be considerate and respectful of others. Vulgarities, threats or abuse of language will not be tolerated.
- Differing opinions and discussion of diverse ideas are encouraged, but personal attacks on anyone, including the Council members or staff, will not be permitted.
- Share freely and be generous with official Council posts but be aware of copyright laws; be accurate and give credit where credit is due.
- Stay on topic.

We may not respond to every comment particularly if we are experiencing a heavy workload. The clerk is a part-time officer and Councillors are volunteers, so we would ask for your patience and forbearance.

If you wish to contact the Council for official purposes, please make direct contact with the council's Clerk and/or members of the council by emailing clerk@fiskertoncummorton.co.uk

When communicating with the Council please bear in mind the following rules:

- No obscene or racist content
- No personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- No potentially libellous statements.
- No plagiarised material; any material in violation of any laws, including copyright
- No private, personal information published without consent
- Commercial promotions or spam

The Council's response to any communication received not meeting the above criteria will be to either ignore, inform the sender of our policy or send a brief response as appropriate. This will be at the Council's discretion based on the message received, given our limited resources available.

Parish Council Website.

The website site 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.

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.

Parish Council email.

The Clerk to the council has their own council email address

clerk@fiskertoncummorton.co.uk

The email account is only monitored intermittently and mainly during office hours, Monday to Friday, and we aim to reply to all questions sent as soon as we can. An 'out of office' message should be used when appropriate.

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.

Individual Councillors are at liberty to communicate directly with parishioners in relation to their own personal views, and if appropriate, copy to the Clerk. NB any emails copied to the Clerk become official and will be subject to The Freedom of Information Act.

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 (texting).

Members and the Clerk may use SMS as a convenient way to communicate at times. All are reminded that this policy also applies to such messages.

Video Conferencing e.g. WhatsApp, Teams

If this medium is used to communicate please note that this policy also applies to the use of video conferencing.

Internal communication and access to information within the Council.

The Council is continually looking at ways to improve its working and may use social media and electronic communications 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.

Adopted: April 2025

Approved by full council

Next Review May2027