



## **Fishguard & Goodwick Town Council**

### **Cyngor Tref Abergwaun ac Wdig**

#### **Communications Guidance**

##### **A: Town Council Correspondence**

1. The point of contact for the Town Council is the Clerk, and it is to the Clerk that all correspondence for the Town Council should be addressed. The Clerk will process all correspondence received by email, telephone, and post, and will circulate as necessary to the Chair and Town Councillors. If unsure of the relevance, the Clerk will liaise with the Chair of the Town Council to confirm action.
2. The Clerk should deal with all correspondence following a meeting.
3. No individual Councillor or Officer should be the sole custodian of any correspondence or information in the name of the Town Council, a committee, sub-committee or working party. Councillors and Officers do not have a right to obtain confidential information/documentation unless they can demonstrate a 'need to know'.
4. Most official correspondence should be sent by the Clerk in the name of the Town Council using Town Council headed paper. For correspondence not sent by the Clerk, they must be provided with a copy.
5. Where correspondence from the 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 (e.g. copy to XX).

##### **B: Agenda Items for Town Council, Committees and Working Parties**

1. Agendas should be clear and concise. They should contain sufficient information to enable Councillors and the public to understand what matters are being considered and what decisions are to be taken at a meeting.
2. Items for information should be kept to a minimum on an agenda.
3. Where the Clerk or a Councillor wishes fellow Councillors to receive matters for "information only", this information will be circulated via the Clerk.

##### **C: Communications with the Press and Public**

1. The Clerk will clear all press reports, or comments to the media, with the Chair of the Council or the Chair of the relevant committee.

2. Press reports from the Council, its Committees or Working Parties should be from the Clerk or via the reporter's own attendance at a meeting.
3. Unless a Councillor has been authorised by the Council to speak to the media on a particular issue, Councillors who are asked for a 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.
4. Where a Councillor comments on a particular issue where it differs from an agreed stance of the Council, it must be disclosed that this is a personal view.
5. If Councillors receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be dealt with under the Town Council adopted complaints procedure.

**D: Councillor Correspondence to external parties**

1. As the Clerk should be sending most of the Town Council's correspondence from a Councillor to other bodies, it needs to be made clear that it is written in their official capacity and has been authorised by the Town Council.
2. A copy of all outgoing correspondence from a Councillor relating to the Council or a Councillor's role within it, should be sent to the Clerk, and it should be noted on the correspondence, eg "copy to the Clerk" so that the recipient is aware that the Clerk has been advised.

**E: Communication with Town Council Staff**

1. Councillors must not give instructions to any members of staff, unless authorised to do so (for example, three or more Councillors sitting as a committee or sub-committee with appropriate delegated powers from the Council).
2. No individual Councillor, regardless of whether or not they are the Chair of the Town Council, the Chair of a committee or other meeting, may give instructions to the Clerk or to another employee which are inconsistent or conflict with Town Council decisions or arrangements for delegated power.
3. Telephone calls should be appropriate to the work of the Town Council.
4. Emails:
  - Instant replies should not be expected from the Clerk; reasons for urgency should be stated.
  - Information to Councillors should normally be directed via the Clerk.
  - Emails from Councillors to external parties should be copied to the Clerk.
  - Councillors should acknowledge their emails when requested to do so.
  - Email trails should be kept on the original topic as per the subject heading.
  - Agenda item requests must be sent as a stand alone email to the Clerk at least 5 clear days prior to the meeting as per Standing Order 9, along with any supporting proposals or costings.

- Council decisions cannot be made by email but must be agreed and minuted as an agenda item at an official meeting.

5. Meetings with the Clerk or other officers:

- Wherever possible an appointment should be made.
- Meetings should be relevant to the work of that particular officer.
- Councillors should be clear that the matter is legitimate Town Council business and not matters driven by personal or political agendas.

**Adopted:**

**Minute Reference:**