

Minster Parish Council

Communications Strategy – March 2021

Introduction

1. This strategy will form an appendix to support the current Press and Media Policy. It is intended to focus the communication efforts of the Parish Council to ensure that it is effective and efficient in its activity to serve the people of Minster and our wider audiences

It takes into account the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity ('the Code'). The Code is statutory guidance and the Parish Council must have regard to it and follow its provisions.

It requires that publicity must:

- Be lawful
- Be cost effective
- Be objective
- Be even-handed
- Be appropriate
- Have regard to equality and diversity
- Be issued with care during periods of heightened sensitivity

It also takes account of national guidance, for example 'The Good Councillor's Guide 2018 (National Association of Local Councils – 'The Guide').

Need for Strategy

2. The Parish Council needs a communications strategy to fulfil its duty to engage effectively with residents, partners and employees. Improved communication will enhance the reputation of the parish council by ensuring that more people are aware of what the council is, what it does and what it can or cannot do.

Good communication with individuals, groups and organisations that we work with helps to achieve our aims and objectives, and encourages constructive response.

It must be well coordinated and managed effectively to ensure consistency and accuracy. It is important to cover reactive and proactive information, i.e. giving residents the information they ask for yet also providing information to influence, explain and change attitudes.

Objectives

3. We aim to use a variety of communication channels; we will retain the existing channels as well as expand into the use of social media. This will make information accessible to the whole community

and encourage greater interaction by becoming more user friendly and responsive. It is essential that all means of communication complement each other.

Management of Communications

4. It is essential that all communication channels are properly managed in order to protect the long term reputation of the council. Any use of communication channels must be in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures and not act in any way to bring the parish council into disrepute.

- Media releases and responses to media requests will continue to be led by the Clerk, in conjunction with the Chair/Vice Chair, as per current policy.
- Articles and informative notices placed in local community based periodicals will be approved by the Clerk and/or the Chair/Vice Chair.
- Notices and informative posters will be displayed on local noticeboards.
- The Clerk has overall responsibility for maintaining the contents of the website in conjunction with a website support volunteer, as per current policy.
- A Facebook page will be opened by the Clerk who will remain the main Administrator of the page. Other administrators will include members of the Communications Committee and one member will be nominated as Facebook Moderator Volunteer.

Review

The Communications Committee will oversee the development of this strategy and its implementation and will conduct reviews every 6 months and provide updates to Full Council.

All decisions on changes to this strategy will be ratified by Full Council.