



PARBOLD PARISH COUNCIL

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Introduction

The purpose of this strategy is to guide Parbold Parish Council's Communications activity and public engagement. As a Council we want to make sure that our communications are two-way. We want to tell people about ourselves and also to listen to what people tell us about themselves and the service improvements they would like. The strategy has been written to help us to involve as many people as possible in a variety of ways. The Communications Strategy will cover all aspects of the Council's communications with everyone who comes into contact with us either directly or indirectly.

Aim

Parbold Parish Council will ensure that it communicates with all stakeholders in a timely and effective manner to inform and consult them about matters that might affect them and to publicise services offered by the council. It will endeavour to ensure communication is clear and appropriate for the message and audience. The key stakeholders with which the Council must communicate include: residents, Councillors (Parish, Borough and County), MP, Lancashire County Council, West Lancashire Borough Council, Local Village Businesses, Community Groups, Village Organisations, Youth Groups and Press.

Methods

Methods used by Parbold Parish Council to communicate and engage stakeholders about Council activities will take the form of:

- Direct with the Parish Clerk
- Parish Council meetings
- Press Releases will be issued if appropriate
- The Parish Council Noticeboards publicising Parish Council activities
- All such notices will be regularly posted to the Parish Council's web site
- Agendas for all meetings will be sent to Parish Councillors
- Councillors will continue to represent the Council on various groups.
- Networking
- Word of mouth

Parbold Parish Council will actively support public participation and none of the above should stop residents from approaching councillors. In addition, all relevant information will be published on the Parish Council's website:-

www.parbold-pc.gov.uk

E-mail: clerk@parbold-pc.gov.uk

Communication

Each Parish Councillor has a duty to represent without bias the interests of the whole community. They will always try to do their best and are available to help you with regard to matters relating to The Parish of Parbold. If you feel from time to time that the matter is important, then please write a letter or email to the Parish. The Parish Clerk will ensure that it is dealt with in a timely and professional manner.

Parish Council Meetings

The Parish Council will normally meet on the first Friday day of every month, except during August. Public consultation will be scheduled early in the meeting to allow Parishioners to give their views on agenda items and any other Parish related matters for discussion at the next Parish Council Meeting.

Correspondence

All correspondence relating to the Parish should be addressed to the Parish Clerk in the first instance. This will ensure that the matter is recorded and passed on for the attention of the Parish Council at the next meeting. All correspondence to the Parish Clerk will be acknowledged via letter within 7 working days of receipt. If received by email then an acknowledgement will be sent via email. It is the Parish Council's intention to meet this time scale but there could be occasions when this is not possible. If a Parishioner wishes a matter to be raised at a Parish Council meeting the Parish Clerk will need to be notified a minimum of 5 clear days prior to the Agenda being published.

Parish Council Website

Parish Council minutes will be displayed on the Parish Website once they have been accepted as true and accurate. This could take some weeks after the meeting but will be available before the next Parish Meeting is due.

Clerk's Note: Parish council approved minutes form a legal document, capable of being produced as evidence in legal proceedings and available for publication by any means from local library to internet. This may have the effect of putting individual Councillor's names on to the internet in such a way that it can be retrieved by search engine.

Councillors have to complete a consent form detailing how much or how little personal information appears on the website.

Review

This document will be reviewed every three years.

PARBOLD PARISH COUNCIL PROTOCOL ON COMMUNICATIONS RELATING TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, OTHER AGENCIES, FELLOW MEMBERS, THE PRESS AND THE PARISH CLERK

1. Correspondence/Information to the Parish Council

1.1 The point of contact for the Parish Council is the Parish Clerk, and it is to the Parish Clerk that all correspondence for the Parish Council should be addressed.

1.2 No individual Councillor or member of staff should be the sole custodian of any correspondence or information in the name of the Parish Council, a committee, sub-committee or working party.

2. Agenda Items for Council and Committees

2.1 Agenda items should be clear and concise. They should contain sufficient information in the reports for members to make an informed decision.

3. Communications with the Press and Public

3.1 Press reports from the Parish Council and Committees etc... should be from the Parish Clerk.

3.2 Members who are asked for comment by the press or members of the public, should ask that it be clearly reported that it is their personal view. Unless you are absolutely certain that you are reporting the view of the Parish Council, make it clear to the members of the public that it is a personal view.

3.3 If Members have a complaint or receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be presented to the Parish Clerk in written format, to be dealt with under the complaints procedure, or via a Parish Council agenda item.

4. Councillor Correspondence to Other Agencies

4.1 All personal correspondence as a Parish Councillor to other agencies should make it clear that the views are the expression of the personal opinions of the writer and not necessarily those of the Parish Council.

4.2 It is good practise to ensure that a copy of all outgoing correspondence from Councillors relating to the Parish Council or one's role within it is provided to the Parish Clerk.

5. Communications with the Parish Clerk

5.1 Councillors must not give instructions to the Parish Clerk, unless authorised to do so. This is where two or more members sitting as a committee or sub-committee with appropriate delegated powers from the council and not as individuals, regardless of whether or not they are the Chairman of the council, committee or other meeting.

5.2 Telephone calls should be kept to a minimum appropriate to the work of the Parish Clerk

5.3 E-mails and letters should be kept to a minimum and instant replies should not be expected from officers. Reasons for urgency should be stated and matters for information to the other councillors should normally be directed via the Parish Clerk. E-mails and letters to other

agencies should be copied to Parish Clerk. Members should acknowledge their e-mails/letters when requested to do so.

5.4 Meetings with the Parish Clerk should, where possible be held via appointment. Meetings should be relevant to the work of the Council. Members should be clear about the matters they wish to discuss

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMPLAINT HANDLING:

The purpose of the complaints procedure is to provide a standard list of procedures to follow in order that problems can be rectified as soon as possible.

If complaints are dealt with quickly and effectively, complainants can feel satisfied that at least their grievance has been properly and fully considered. It also provides the Council with assurance that complaints are dealt with in a professional and fair manner.

Below is the procedure which Parbold Parish Council follow:

- If a complaint is received by phone or face to face that cannot be rectified immediately, ask for it to be put in writing.
- Complaints can be dealt with by the Clerk or the Chairman. On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk should try and settle the complaint directly, but not before notifying the person complained of and giving them an opportunity to explain actions/circumstances, etc...
- Where a complaint is about the Clerk or a Chairman, the complaint should be referred to the council for consideration.
- The Clerk or Chairman should report all complaints that have been dealt with to the next meeting of council, and the complainant will be notified when this will be so that he/she can attend.
- The Council should consider whether the circumstances of a complaint warrant the exclusion of the public and press. They will, however, have to inform both of the final decision.
- As soon as a decision has been made, the complainant should be informed in writing.
- The council can defer making a decision on a complaint if it needs to wait for legal advice or further information.