

# North Kyme Parish Council



## Communications Policy

This Policy is designed to assist Parish Councillors and staff to effectively communicate with the general public. Objective To provide a helpful response to telephone, or written enquiries in an efficient and polite manner.

**Personal Contact** This can be in person or by telephone. If it relates to a Parish Council service, then the caller will be dealt with by the appropriate member of staff. If that member of staff is unavailable, contact details will be taken to ensure the caller can be contacted at the earliest suitable opportunity.

If it relates to a County Council or District Council service, the caller will be advised to contact the County Council or District Council by providing them with the following appropriate number / e-mail:

- Lincolnshire County Council – 01522 552 222 - [customer\\_services@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:customer_services@lincolnshire.gov.uk)
- North Kesteven District Council – 01529-414155 – [customer\\_services@n-kesteven.gov.uk](mailto:customer_services@n-kesteven.gov.uk)

Parish Councillors and Staff are advised against acting as an intermediary with the County Council and District Council Contact Centres; this is not being unhelpful, but to aid the trained staff of the County and District Council and /or their trained call centre staff to direct enquiries to the appropriate department or other public service.

#### Parish Councillor's Details

If requested, the staff will provide a member of the public with the names and contact numbers for Parish Councillors.

#### Media Statements

Any press release from the Parish Council is to be approved by the Parish Clerk and where requested, copied to all Parish Councillors. Press releases from the Parish Council need not be formally worded in stilted language but must not be partisan. For the avoidance of doubt, an individual Parish Councillor or political party may issue their own statements to the media but those must not give the impression of being a release from the Parish Council

There is no need to respond to unsolicited invitations or spam emails, indeed there are very good reasons for not so doing. Inevitably, the Parish Council may receive repeated communications from individual members of the public on the same subject(s). It is permissible for staff to merely acknowledge such emails/letters without having to respond to each point.

In any such case, the Parish Clerk should be consulted. It should always be remembered that it is possible to recover any electronic correspondence. **Parish Councillor's Details** If requested, the staff will provide a member of the public with the names and contact numbers for Parish Councillors.

**Media Statements** Any press release from the Parish Council is to be approved by the Parish Clerk and where requested, copied to all Parish Councillors. Press releases from the Parish Council need not be formally worded in stilted language but must not be partisan.

For the avoidance of doubt, an individual Parish Councillor or political party may issue their own statements to the media but those must not give the impression of being a release from the Parish Council. **Purdah** is the period prior to an election once a notice of poll has been official.

A separate policy statement in respect of the 'purdah' period is available from the Parish Clerk.

**Obscene & Abusive Language** Staff and Councillors are not obliged to listen to abusive and obscene

tirades or address members of the public in this way. In such a case the caller should politely be asked to desist and advised that if they continue to use such language the call will be terminated.

If the abuse or obscenity continues, then the call can be terminated. Care however should be taken as some 'vivid descriptions' are used in the ordinary course of speech by certain sections of the community. A judgement should be made from the tone if that is the position. In such cases a councillor or member of staff can ask for moderation but may choose to continue the contact.