

CLAXBY PARISH COUNCIL – ELECTRONIC AND SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION POLICY – DRAFT v2

This policy covers the Parish Council’s current use of digital, social media and electronic communication and should be used in conjunction with the approved Communications Policy.

INTRODUCTION

At present Claxby Parish Council maintains a website and uses email to communicate. The Council may add to these channels of communication as it seeks to improve the services it delivers.

1 Email

1.1 The Clerks email address is claxbyparishcouncil@gmail.com

1.2 Councillors and the Clerk should use their Parish Council email addresses effectively and responsibly only in the course of parish duties and in accordance with approved operational and security standards.

1.3 No message should be sent which may bring the Council into disrepute.

1.4 All email correspondence should be dealt with in the same professional and diligent manner as written correspondence. All communication on behalf of the Council will usually come from the Clerk. Emails received by Councillors from external parties should be acknowledged making no comment other than saying that they will forward the email to the Clerk for action. Should a Councillor be authorised by Council to send an email to an external party a copy must be sent to the Clerk.

1.5 Email messages cannot be guaranteed to be private and secure and, ideally, all emails should only be seen by the intended recipient(s).

1.6 Councillors and the Clerk using Council email addresses should ensure that replies to any email correspondence are made as soon as possible and within seven days.

1.7 Councillors should be particularly aware of emails received from an unknown source that contains attachments and should not be opened as they may contain viruses.

1.8 The Clerk and Chair currently hold a list of parishioners’ email addresses. This list was compiled with written permission from each individual for use in communicating Parish Council and village news. The list will be reviewed and amended as required.

1.9 The use of BCC copying must be used when emailing multiple members of the public.

2 Website

2.1 The Council’s website <https://claxby.parish.lincolnshire.gov.uk> provides an informative online resource for Councillors, residents and visitors. This includes information about the Council (including notice of meetings, agendas and minutes), community, local services, news and links to other useful websites.

2.2 The website is hosted by a Third party provider. They may be asked for support for making website changes, provided associated costs are within the agreed budget and approved by the Council. The Clerk is responsible for making updates and is empowered by the Council to make routine updates without prior reference to the Council.

2.3 Information on the website should be accurate and kept up-to-date by the Clerk, in line with legal regulations. Councillors are responsible for checking it and informing the Clerk should any issues arise.

2.4 Councillors and other parties may submit material for inclusion in the website provided it is in line with the guidelines of this policy and is technically feasible. Any request to include information on the website should be made via the Clerk. The Clerk is empowered to edit or refuse any

material, generally guidance will be provided on the reasons. Ultimately the Clerk is accountable to the Council for any content decisions made.

2.5 Links to other Websites are for information only.

2.6 Website material that is considered as Archive Material should be preserved without change to the content but can be restructured and reorganised as required.

2.7 The Clerk will update the Council on substantial changes made to the website via the Clerk's Report.

3. Press and Media (see Standing Order section 22 on The Press)

3.1 The Clerk is the nominated Press Officer and will clear all press notices or comments to the media with the Chairman of the Council or the relevant committee Chair.

3.2 Press Reports from the Council, its committees or working parties will come from the Clerk or via the reporters' own attendance at a meeting

3.3 Requests to take photographs of Councillors or the Clerk in relation to Council business must be agreed by the individual.

3.4 Councillors approached directly by the media can provide responses, making it clear that the views given are their own and not necessarily those of the Parish Council

3.5 Councillors approached by the media in relation to their roles outside of the Council must make it clear that they are not commenting as an elected member but as an individual.

4. Telephone and Texting (SMS)

4.1 Telephone calls between council members should be appropriate to the work of the Council, kept to a minimum and be brief in nature.

4.2 There is no requirement for a member of the Council to communicate with other Councillors or the public via text messaging.

4.3 Councillors receiving telephone calls or text messages from the public should respond by giving the Clerk's contact details or, if appropriate, offering to pass on any information received to the Clerk.

5. WhatsApp

The Parish Council does not currently host a WhatsApp group. Approved council posts on village WhatsApp groups should be limited to information on Parish Council projects, events and activities and should only be posted by the Clerk or designated councillors.

Councillors, when posting comments as an individual on village WhatsApp groups, must follow the principles of the Councillors' Code of Conduct and make it clear that their comments are being made as an individual and not on behalf of the Council.

The Council's response to any communication not meeting the above criteria will be to either inform the sender of its policies or to send a brief response as appropriate. This will be at the discretion of the Clerk.

Date approved
August 2024

Date of review.
September 2025