

Tur Langton Parish Council

Communications Policy

Aims

To establish clear, easy to use channels of communication between Tur Langton Parish Council and members of our local community. The Parish Council aims to provide information on important matters affecting our community and to encourage comment from interested individuals and groups. Each Parish Councillor has a duty to represent, without bias, the interests of the whole community. They will always try to help with regard to matters relating to the parish of Tur Langton. A contact list is available on the Parish Council notice board and also on the parish Council website.

To communicate in a professional and timely manner with the County and District Council on planning and other matters including consultations.(*Appendix 1*)

To communicate regularly with, the police, County Councillor and District Councillors, informing of the dates of meetings, receiving reports for our meetings and discussing issues.

To communicate effectively between councillors ensuring smooth running of Parish Council meetings and Parish Council business.(*Appendix 2*)

Means of communication

1. **Meetings.** These take place in January, March, May, July, September and November at 7.30pm in Tur Langton Village Hall. They are planned two meetings ahead and are advertised on the notice board, (at least three clear days before the meeting) on our website, in the Kibworth Chronicle, Langton Newsletter and our own newsletter. Meetings can be attended by members of the public.
2. **Annual Parish Meeting.** This is held in May when a summary of Tur Langton Parish Council activities for the previous is shared. This is also a forum for parishioners to raise questions and discuss issues.
3. **Website.** The website is our primary source of information as easily accessible. The Parish Council endeavours to keep the website current and up to date
4. **Newsletters** (Kibworth Chronicle, Langton Newsletter, Tur Langton Parish Council Newsletter) Newsletters will contain details of meeting dates, summaries of current Parish Council activities and are a vehicle to deliver information received by the Parish Council that is relevant to residents. Tur Langton Parish Council Newsletter will contain more detail. Contributions from local clubs and societies are welcome and local businesses can purchase advertising if space allows.
5. **Email.** This is how councillors / clerk / parishioners frequently communicate with each other. Care will be taken to ensure permission is granted to share email addresses. Care will also be taken to check recipients when messages are forwarded or replied to.

- 6. Notice board.** Meetings, finance, councillor details and relevant information received by the council will be displayed on the lockable PC side of the notice board. The public side of the notice board will be checked at least bi-monthly when the agenda is placed on the board and out of date / inappropriate material removed.
- 7. Written Communication and correspondence.** All correspondence should be addressed to the clerk. This will ensure that the matter is recorded and passed to the council for their attention at the next meeting. All correspondence will be acknowledged by the clerk within seven days, if email is used the reply will be by email. If a parishioner wishes a subject to be raised then the clerk must be informed seven days before the publication of the agenda.

Review

This communication policy will be reviewed annually on the date specified in Tur Langton Parish Council's Yearly Plan

Appendix 1 - Protocol for Responding to Consultation Requests

Responses to Consultations

1. The Parish Council receives numerous requests to respond to consultations and is a statutory consultee on planning applications. Responses can only be agreed by a full Parish Council meeting. Councillors may submit a personal response where appropriate, but must make it clear that they are not responding on behalf of the Parish Council
2. On receipt of a consultation request the clerk will circulate it to councillors, electronically where possible, highlighting the response deadline. For specific details relating to planning applications and Harborough District Council (HDC) strategic planning consultations see points 8-17 below
3. Where the deadline is after the next planned meeting and the consultation subject is considered to be of significant importance by the chair and clerk it will be added to the agenda for that meeting. Consultations where level of importance is harder to establish the consultation will be circulated to all councillors and will be added to the agenda if any one or more of the councillors wish it to be considered.
4. Where the deadline is before the next planned full Parish Council meeting the clerk will seek feedback as to whether councillors wish to respond as a council and if any one or more of the councillors wish to respond an Extraordinary Meeting will be called
5. When deciding whether to respond to a consultation careful consideration should be given to its purpose and the policy / decision it will influence. If the council later objects to a resulting policy / decision it is likely that the weight given to the objection will be reduced if the council did not respond to the original consultation.
6. When a consultation is included on the agenda the clerk will request feedback prior to the meeting so that comments can be collated for discussion at the meeting. Any response agreed at the meeting will be submitted by the clerk.
7. The council will take into account any views submitted by residents when deciding a response. The agenda is put up on the notice board and also included on the website to enable residents to be aware that a consultation response is to be considered. Where appropriate consultations will be advertised to residents via the website, notice board and newsletters.

Specific details relating to responses to Planning Applications

8. HDC publishes a weekly list of new planning applications which is circulated to all Parish Council clerks. Plans can be viewed online on HDC's planning portal - <http://harborough.gov.uk/planning> . HDC also sends hard copies of plans out to Parish Councils, currently to the chair, who will make them available to councillors and members of the public.
9. On logging into the Planning Portal there is an "In-Tray", showing live applications for the village of Tur Langton. The council has also completed a search on this planning portal (currently to 5/1/2020) which results in applications for Tur Langton being sent by email to the clerk as soon as they are received by HDC along with subsequent updates, enabling the Parish Council to be aware of applications before they appear on the planning list.

10. The clerk will forward this email notification, which includes a link to the plan on the Planning Portal, to councillors as soon as possible and include it on the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting if the deadline is after that date.
11. If the deadline is only a few days before the next meeting the clerk will attempt to negotiate an extension with the relevant officer at HDC to enable the plan to be considered at that meeting. If this is not possible action as in step 4 above will be taken.
12. On receipt of the weekly planning lists the clerk will check to make sure there are no applications that have not been notified through the search (9 above) and check for any significant applications outside of Tur Langton that the council may wish to respond to. Should this be the case action will take place as in points 10 and 11 above. Lists which include plans of interest will be circulated.
13. If an application is to be considered the clerk will ask for feedback from councillors (point 6 above). The chair will bring the hard copy of the plans to the meeting. Any response agreed will be submitted to HDC by the clerk via the Planning Portal as a Consultee Response.
14. Hard copies of the plans are retained by the chair with a copy of the response in line with the council's Records Management and Retention of Documents policy
15. HDC circulates lists of planning decisions by email to the clerk and send a hard copy of decisions relating to Tur Langton to the chair. The clerk will circulate decision lists which include any relating to Tur Langton or any other of interest. On receipt of details of a decision relating to Tur Langton councillors can check the decision notice on the Planning Portal.
16. If councillors note any breach of planning conditions they should report this to the clerk who will bring to the attention of the Enforcement Team at HDC.

Harborough District Council's Strategic Planning Consultations

17. HDC's strategic planning consultations are available on their "Strategic Planning Consultation Portal" via this link: <http://harborough.idi-consult.net/ldp/> . The clerk and chair hold the council's log in details for this portal which enables responses to be submitted. Councillors are encouraged to create their own personal log in to enable them to view the consultation and submit their own personal comments if desired.

Appendix 2 - Internal communication protocol

1. Councillors will inform the clerk of periods of time longer than 5 days (e.g. work commitments, holidays, illness) when they are unable to respond to communication.
2. The Clerk will send out a reminder for Parish Council Meetings two weeks before the meeting. Councillors will respond promptly and confirm their availability. If a councillor becomes unavailable after this they must inform the clerk as a matter of urgency to allow for rearrangement of the meeting. Rearrangement of a meeting should be the last resort as the date will have been advertised for at least 4 months previously and it is difficult to advertise a change of date other than the notice board and website.
3. Emails requiring a prompt response (e.g. organising dates for meetings, collating consultations responses, planning applications) will include "please respond" in the subject box. Everyone will respond to these emails promptly. If the councillor / clerk has "no comment" they will reply stating this.
4. Emails that are information only and do not require any action or response will be kept to a minimum. Where feasible this information will be posted on the website with a link sent weekly.