

Delabole Parish Council
Communications Policy
Adopted June 2022

Contents

Introduction	3
Meetings	3
How to contact Delabole Parish Council	4
Information about you	4
Where to find information about Delabole Parish Council	4
Noticeboards	4
The Local Press	4
Website	4
Social Media	5
Facebook	5
Procedures	5
Procedures for Communicating with the Council	5
Telephone calls	5
Website Communication	5
Social media	6
Do you want an item put on the agenda?	7
Do you want to speak at a meeting?	7
How to Complain to your Council	7
Verbal Complaints	7
Written Complaints	8
Complaints Against Council Members or Officers	8
Inappropriate Behaviour	8
Appendices	8

Introduction

Delabole Parish Council (DPC) is committed to ensuring that decision-making is transparent and accountable. It will enable the local community to influence decisions that impact on their lives and on the wellbeing of the local community as a whole, through clear communication channels.

Efficient, clear communication between the community and Delabole Parish Council is really important to us. This document sets out policy, procedure and standards that DPC has in place in order to communicate with our community. Better service and communication between councils and their communities is based on two central themes; transparent decision-making and customer service.

This document includes basic service goals such as turnaround times for correspondence, returning telephone calls, as well as notification and complaint handling.

Meetings

Our meetings are run in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12, which set out how we should notify you of our full council meetings and Annual Meeting of the Council, and also includes provision on public participation.

Based on these principles, we are committed to ensuring that there is:

- Community access to one council meeting each month (excluding August) - 15 minutes participation at the start of each council meeting.
- Public access to council records (see Freedom of Information Policy in Appendix 3)
- Agendas published on the council website and local noticeboards three clear working days ahead of any meeting.
- Approved minutes of the previous meeting on the council website and the main local noticeboard.
- Provision for conducting community surveys.
- Provision for public meetings on topical local issues
- Provision of service and information to the local community through the the clerk, by telephone, email, website contact form and letter.
- Provision to assist members of the local community who wish to contact councillors.

How to contact Delabole Parish Council

You are able to contact Clerk at Delabole Parish Council via a number of options:

By person at: by appointment only

Telephone: 07869 725450

Email: clerk@delaboleparishcouncil.gov.uk

Website contact form: www.delaboleparishcouncil.gov.uk/

You are able to contact councillors directly, and their details are listed on the council website – www.delaboleparishcouncil.gov.uk

Messages can be left with the clerk who will pass on the message, either by calling or emailing the councillor (whichever is deemed more appropriate).

Information about you

We receive phone calls and emails from the general public, whether it is to get in touch with a councillor, report a problem or enquire about an event. When we receive communication from you, we will keep your details in order to process your enquiry. When we are satisfied that your enquiry has been dealt with appropriately, we will destroy your details either by confidential waste or deletion from our electronic records.

We will inform you, at the time of enquiry, who we will pass your information to, and for which purposes. For example, if you want something raised at a council meeting, we will forward your enquiry to all councillors. For more details see heading 'Want to put an item on the agenda?' A copy of all correspondence is available to the general public who attend meetings. Our Privacy Notice and Data Protection and Information Policy can be found on the website.

Where to find information about Delabole Parish Council

Noticeboards

We have one noticeboard in the village:

- This is located on the High Street in the layby by the park (opposite the church).

The Local Press

We work closely with the local press who are invited to each council meeting and often produce an article following that meeting on any significant news.

Website

The website is updated regularly and includes, amongst other things, the following information:

- Agendas (which includes details of income and expenditure)
- Minutes
- Annual Calendar of Meetings

- Councillor contact details
- Policy and Procedure
- Other relevant information

Social Media

Facebook

Currently the parish council does not have a Facebook page. Some information is shared on the Delabole Community Facebook page.

Procedures

Procedures for communicating with the council

Telephone calls

Telephone contact between the clerk and members of the public gives DTC an opportunity to respond quickly and effectively to enquiries, comments and complaints from members of the public. Where possible, we try to ensure that:

- All telephone calls are answered either in person or by an automated telephone answering system.
- If required the clerk will take a message including brief details of the caller's name, contact details and the nature of the enquiry. This can then be passed on to the person we feel can answer your question.
- The clerk will aim to deal with enquiries as soon as possible, It may not always be possible to respond on the same day due to the part time nature of the clerk's contract.

Website Communication

The clerk is notified via email when an enquiry comes through the website contact form.

Social media

DPC does not currently have a Facebook page. DPC may post or share events on other sites.

Do you want an item put on the agenda?

If you would like an issue to be discussed at a council meeting, this needs to go on the agenda and must be received, in writing, by the clerk at least 5 working days before the next meeting. If the correspondence is received later than that, it will be put on the following agenda. The clerk will inform you of the date of the meeting your correspondence will be discussed. Email correspondence or phone call will also be accepted forms of correspondence.

Correspondence is distributed to all councillors and is available for the public to view at the council meeting (apart from Part 2 paperwork which is confidential).

It is important that you are also aware that members of the public are entitled to record meetings (e.g filming, audio recording).

Do you want to speak at a meeting?

At the start of each meeting, we allow members of the public to speak on any issue for a 3-minute period during the 15-minute public participation agenda item. A brief summary of what you would like to speak about would be helpful. You can request this by any of the communication methods listed above.

How to complain to your council

Delabole Parish Council recognises that from time to time there will be concerns expressed by members of the public over the activities of the council, one of its members or employees. To address these issues the council has adopted a procedure for the handling of complaints. This procedure allows people to have a form of address to the council if they feel they have a complaint, or have been unfairly treated in their dealings with the council staff, councillors, the council or its committees.

If a member of the public feels that his/her complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily he /she may submit a complaint against a member/members of the council to the Monitoring Officer at Cornwall Council:

The Monitoring Officer, Cornwall Council, Treyew Road, Truro, TR1 3AY.

Verbal Complaints

1. On receipt of a complaint by telephone or in person the clerk will try to satisfy the complainant immediately or as soon as is practicable.
2. Any anonymous complaint will not be dealt with.
3. If the clerk is unable to answer the complaint immediately, then full details of the complaint together with the complainant's telephone number, name and contact details will be recorded so that a further verbal response can be made as soon as possible.
4. If a verbal response is unable to satisfy, then the clerk/member will ask that the complaint be put in writing in order that it can be investigated more fully.

Written Complaints

1. On receiving a written complaint, the clerk shall try to settle the complaint directly.
2. If the complaint is about the behaviour of a member or employee of the council or a contractor used by the parish council, the clerk must also notify the person and

offer the opportunity for comment on the manner in which it is intended to try and settle the complaint.

3. If necessary, the clerk will send a holding letter to the complainant to allow further time to address the issues raised.
4. The clerk or chairman shall bring any written complaint which has not been settled to the next meeting of the council and the clerk shall notify the complainant of the date of the meeting. The complainant will be offered the opportunity to explain the nature of the complaint to the meeting.
5. The clerk shall consult with the chairman/vice chairman to consider whether the written complaint warrants discussion at a council meeting in the absence of the press and public, with the decision on the complaint being announced at the council meeting in public.
6. The clerk will communicate in writing the decision that has been made by the council and the nature of any action taken by the council.

Complaints Against Council Members or Officers

1. Any complaint against a member or officer must be submitted in writing.
2. If the complaint is against the actions of the clerk, it should be submitted in writing to the chairman.
3. If the complaint is made against the actions of a member or employee, the clerk will present the complaint to the council for consideration at a meeting held in the absence of the press or public.
4. If the complaint is made against the actions of the clerk, the chairman will present the complaint to the council for consideration at a meeting held in the absence of the press or public.
5. The complainant may be invited to attend part of the meeting to explain the nature of their complaint, in the absence of the public and press.
6. Persons mentioned in the complaint will have the opportunity to explain the nature of their actions to the meeting, in the absence of the public and press.
7. The result of any council consideration of a complaint will be announced at a council meeting in public.

Inappropriate Behaviour

We understand that sometimes the general public may not be happy with a decision made by the council. However, our staff and councillors have the right to carry out their work without threat or abuse, and it will ensure that behaviour must stay within certain acceptable limits. The council is entitled to consider placing and enforcing limits on contacts between Delabole Parish Council and the person displaying the inappropriate behaviour.