

# Bruton Town Council Communications Policy

## 1. Press Communications

- (i) The Clerk will clear all press reports, or comments to the media, with the Chairman of the council or the Chairman of the relevant committee.
- (ii) Press reports from the council, its committees or working parties should be from the Clerk or an officer or via the reporter's own attendance at a meeting.
- (iii) Unless a Councillor has been authorised by the council to speak to the media on a particular issue, Councillors who are asked for comment by the press should make it clear that it is a personal view and ask that it be clearly reported as their personal view.
- (iv) Unless a Councillor is absolutely certain that he/she is reporting the view of the council, they must make it clear to members of the public that they are expressing a personal view.
- (v) If Councillors receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be dealt with under the Council's adopted complaints procedure, or via a council agenda item.

## 2. Councillor Correspondence to External Parties

- (i) As the Clerk should be sending most of the council's correspondence from a Councillor to other bodies, it needs to be made clear that it is written in their official capacity and has been authorised by the town council.
- (ii) A copy of all outgoing correspondence relating to the council or a Councillor's role within it, should be sent to the Clerk, and it be noted on the correspondence, e.g. "copy to the Clerk" so that the recipient is aware that the Clerk has been advised.

## 3. Communications with Parish Council Staff

- (i) Councillors must not give instructions to any member of staff, unless authorised to do so (for example, three or more Councillors sitting as a committee or sub-committee with appropriate delegated powers from the council).

(ii) No individual Councillor, regardless of whether or not they are the Chair of the council, the Chair of a committee or other meeting, or are styled "Leader" of the Council, may give instructions to the Clerk or to another employee which are inconsistent or conflict with council decisions or arrangements for delegated powers.

(iii) Telephone calls should be appropriate to the work of the parish council.

(iv) E-mails:

- Instant replies should not be expected from the Clerk; reasons for urgency should be stated;
- Information to Councillors should normally be directed via the Clerk;
- E-mails from Councillors to external parties should be copied to the Clerk;
- Councillors should acknowledge their e-mails when requested to do so.

(v) Meetings with the Clerk or other officers:

- Wherever possible an appointment should be made;
- Meetings should be relevant to the work of that particular officer;
- Councillors should be clear that the matter is legitimate council business and not matters driven by personal or political agendas.