



Penrith Town Council

Unit 1, Church House, 19-24 Friargate, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 7XR
Tel: 01768 899 773 Email: office@penrithtowncouncil.co.uk

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This policy aims to establish a protocol for effective communication of the Town Council's activities and pertinent information to the media and members of the public. This policy is supported by the Councils Communication Procedure and Model Publication Scheme.

- The Town Council is accountable to members of the public and has a duty to convey its decisions and actions through various media.
- All communication will be conveyed in an open and straightforward manner.
- The Town Clerk is the Proper Officer of the Town Council and is responsible for all formal communication between the Council, the press and members of the public.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Council will facilitate community engagement with the electorate by:

- Publishing its meeting dates, times and venues
- Providing an allocated period of time for Public Participation in meetings
- Holding regular councillor surgeries
- Consulting with the electorate to gauge public opinion
- Maintaining an up to date website
- Providing articles in the local press

METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

The Council will use the following media to communicate its activities:

ACTIVITY	METHOD OF COMMUNICATION
Newsletter	Website
Approved minutes	Website/library
Agendas	Website/library/Noticeboard/Council Office
Council policies/procedures	Website
Annual Report	Website
Press release	Press/radio/website
Annual external audit	Website
Adopted Annual Accounts	Website
Councillor vacancies	Website/press
Financial information	Website

Other information will be provided in accordance with the Council's adopted Publication Scheme.

PROTOCOL

- I. Using themes approved by the Town Council, the Chairman will be responsible for presenting the Town Council's Annual Report at the Annual Town Meeting.
- II. Once a formal written draft has been approved by full Council, the Annual Report will be published.
- III. The Town Clerk and officers are responsible for the preparation of notices of Council meetings, agendas and minutes.
- IV. The Town Clerk is responsible for the development and maintenance of the Council's website so that it remains current.
- V. All correspondence addressed to the Town Council will be actioned by the Town Clerk or relevant officer.
- VI. Information that needs to be considered by the Town Council or one of its committees will be placed on the first agenda after its receipt.
- VII. Agenda for Council meetings will be accompanied with sufficient written reports and information to enable Members to make an informed decision.
- VIII. Agenda will be issued as hard copies and will be delivered electronically so that they are received by Members at least 3 clear days before all meetings of the Council.
- IX. Agenda and minutes for all meetings of the Council will be published on the Council's website.
- X. Agenda and minutes for full Council will be made available at Penrith library.
- XI. Other relevant information will be emailed to Members in between meetings.
- XII. Council information will be made available to members of the public in accordance with the Council's 'Publication Scheme'.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

- I. In accordance with Standing Order nos: 20(a) and 20(b) requests for information held by the Council shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.
- II. Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer to the Council.
- III. The Council shall have the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- IV. In accordance with Standing Order no: 11 neither the Town Clerk, nor Members, will disclose confidential information that is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act.
- V. The agenda and its supporting papers, and the minutes from a meeting where confidential or sensitive information is discussed, shall not disclose or otherwise undermine such information which, for special reasons, is not in the public interest.

Approved: May 2015
Reviewed annually