

# Braishfield Parish Council

## Communications Policy

### 1. Introduction and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to define the roles, responsibilities, and timescales within the Council regarding communications and to provide guidelines for the community.

Braishfield Parish Council (BPC) represents the views and needs of the local community. It provides information on important parish matters affecting the community and encourages comment from interested individuals and groups.

### 2. Methods of Communication

Braishfield Parish Council's aim is to inform members of the community through as many communication channels as possible about what is happening within the Parish and local area and share important news and information.

#### Website

The Parish Council will publish information on its website. This will include parish council meeting agendas, draft and approved minutes of council meetings and working groups. Hard copies are available by request to the Clerk.

Communications should promote the Council's website.

#### Noticeboards

There are seven noticeboards in the village. The main noticeboard at the entrance to the Recreation Ground and car park will be kept updated with BPC's agendas and notices of designated days for flag flying.

#### Braishfield Village News

Reports from BPC are published bi-monthly in the Braishfield Village News magazine which is delivered to all households, The Pantry and village pubs.

#### Local Emergency Plan

Depending on the emergency, where appropriate, BPC will produce a leaflet/flyer and coordinate a network of deliverers to deliver news to all households.

#### Social Media and Email

Braishfield Residents Forum on Facebook was set up and is administered by a resident. The page was set up to engage with the community and has a wide reach. A new Parish Council Facebook page will be set up for residents and will be administered by the Clerk.

A village email network was set up by and is managed by the BVA's Network Manager.

### 3. Council correspondence

- The point of contact for Braishfield Parish Council is the Clerk. All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk. This will ensure that the matter is recorded and passed to BPC for their attention at the next meeting. All correspondence to the parish council should be addressed to the Clerk. This will ensure that the matter is recorded and passed to the parish council for their attention at the next meeting.
- If a parishioner wishes a matter to be formally discussed at a Parish Council Meeting, the Parish Clerk must be notified at least 10 days prior to the meeting to enable the item to be placed on the Agenda. The Clerk should deal with all correspondence following a meeting.
- The Clerk will provide a list of correspondence to each Committee or to the appropriate meeting. The Clerk will aim to respond to all correspondence within five working days, either with a full response or with details of when one of BPC's committees will consider its response (the exception to this will be during periods of absence).
- The Clerk will place an out of office automated email message in his or her absence with further contact details.
- All official correspondence from the parish council should be sent by the Clerk in the name of the parish council. Correspondence from individual parish councillors should be avoided; however, there may be exceptional situations when it is appropriate for a parish councillor to issue correspondence in his/her own name.
- Where a member is authorised to communicate on behalf of the Parish Council, they must make it clear that they are acting on behalf of the Parish Council and may sign off the communication "on behalf of Braishfield Parish Council".
- 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.

### 4. Council Meetings

The Parish Council usually meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7pm in the Village Hall or via an online platform during COVID-19.

Meetings of the Parish Council and Extraordinary meetings of the Parish Council are held in public (they are not public meetings). Members of the public have a statutory right to attend meetings of the council as observers. During every parish council meeting there is an opportunity for members of the public to raise a matter of concern or to comment on an item on the agenda. After the conclusion of the public speaking section however, members of the public are not permitted to contribute to further agenda items unless permission is granted by the Chair.

### 5. Councillors

Councillors must ensure that all communication with the public on council related matters reflects the decisions and policies of Braishfield Parish Council, regardless of the councillor's individual views on any subject.

#### Emails

Instant replies should not be expected. Councillors should acknowledge their emails when requested to do so or provide a response by the date due unless the email is marked as urgent.

Adopted by the Council on: 03/11/20  
Next Review Date: 03/11/21

### Councillors' roles

A list of councillors' roles is available on BPC's website. The list includes each councillor's responsibilities and their contact details.