



Broseley Town Council

Communications Policy

Introduction

Broseley Town Council has a duty to engage with its residents, partners, employees and stakeholders by communicating effectively. This policy sets out the objectives of the Town Council and the best way that Broseley Town Council can achieve this, both in terms of clear messages and staff/volunteer time.

1. What should the Council be communicating?

- Services provided by the Council
- Meeting schedules
- Meeting agendas and minutes
- Council performance
- Local event information (with Council involvement and without if relevant to residents)
- Updates/changes to local services not provided by the Council e.g. bus services, Friendly Bus, Citizens Advice.

2. Who should we be communicating with?

- Residents
- Town Council employees
- Town Councillors
- Hard-to-reach groups (inc. elderly, housebound, young people)
- The media
- Shropshire Council
- Voluntary groups and organisations
- The business community
- MPs
- Public sector service providers (Police, Health, Fire)
- Local schools

3. How should we be communicating?

- Town Council Website
- Newsletter: Town Talk
- Annual Report
- Public Consultation
 - Questionnaires
 - Direct letters
- Public notice boards
- Library
- Press releases to appropriate local publications
- VisitBroseley website

4. Dissemination of Council documents

- a. Information relating to the Council and its operations is available as set out in the Council's Publication Scheme, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.
- b. **Annual Report:** once a formal draft has been written and approved by the Town Council this will be published and made available to the public. A summary will be distributed to households throughout the town. A copy will also be held for public view at the Council offices, at the Library and on the website.
- c. **Meeting agendas & Council minutes:** agendas and supporting documentation should be emailed / delivered to Councillors at least three clear working days before the meeting date. A copy of the agenda will be displayed on the website and on public notice boards. The local Shropshire Councillors, police officer and press will also be sent a copy.

Draft minutes should be provided to all Councillors and made available to members of the public via the website, clearly marked as draft. Once signed off at the next meeting the draft minutes should be replaced with approved minutes on the website. Council minutes should also be available to view in the Council folder at the Library.

- d. **Policy documents:** all Councillors should be in receipt of all Council policies. All relevant policies should also be available to the public via the website and the office.

5. Dissemination of Community Information

- a. **Town Talk:** this publication includes both Council and community information directly relating to residents of the town. This will be published quarterly and will be prepared by the Town Clerk with input from Town Councillors.
- b. **Local community groups (Broseley in Bloom, Christmas Lights etc):** the Town Council will provide communications support by including information about events within Town Talk, on public notice boards and the website, and any other way deemed appropriate.
- c. **Broseley Quarterly:** the Town Clerk will liaise with the publisher regarding suitable content.
- d. **What's What Magazine:** the Town Clerk will liaise with the publisher regarding lead times and prepare contributions and relevant press releases with input from Councillors

6. Communicating with the Media

a. Media enquiry: Council matters

The Town Clerk may provide factual information relating to minuted Council policies and decisions.

In the event of an enquiry requiring a more detailed response or addressing a sensitive matter, the Clerk (Clerk's office) should take the full contact details and respond in writing promptly. This will allow time to give consideration to the questions asked, giving a full and accurate response.

The Town Clerk will agree a statement with the Mayor or the relevant committee Chair and any reference to an individual Councillor must be agreed with that individual prior to release.

b. Media enquiry: Public events

The Council office will provide as much factual information as available from marketing material and endeavour to provide press with the appropriate contacts or website links for events / news relating to the Broseley community.

7. Releasing statements to the media / public

The Council's public statements will reflect its policies and decisions as set out in Council minutes. Any Councillor or officer may draft a public statement, but such statements should only be released by the Clerk. All public statements should be in writing and preferably in a Press Release Pro Forma.

In the event of any verbal statements being made to press then a written record should be made.

Individual Councillors may comment either in public or to the media, provided:

- a. They follow the Council's Code of Conduct.
- b. They make it clear they are commenting as an individual.
- c. They do not misrepresent the policies and decisions of the Council, or the views of their fellow Councillors.

8. Internal communications

- a. 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).
- b. 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 power.
- c. Telephone calls should be appropriate to the work of the Council.
- d. E-mails:
 - i. Instant replies should not be expected from officers; reasons for urgency should be stated;
 - ii. Information to Councillors should normally be directed via the Clerk;
 - iii. E-mails from Councillors to external parties should be copied to the Clerk;
 - iv. Councillors should acknowledge their e-mails when requested to do so.
- e. Meetings with the Clerk or other officers:
 - i. Wherever possible an appointment should be made;
 - ii. Meetings should be relevant to the work of that particular officer;
 - iii. Councillors should be clear that the matter is legitimate council business and not matters driven by personal or political agendas.
- f. Staff and Councillors play a crucial role in building a Council's reputation. Whether they are frontline staff or representing the Council externally, the way they behave and how they talk about the Council has a huge impact. Good internal communications are therefore very important in helping a Council to achieve its objectives and generate positive perceptions in the local community.

Approved 12th June 2018