

**Wentworth Parish Council**  
**Parish council's correspondence policy**

**AIMS**

To establish clear, easy to use channels of communication between the Parish Council and the Parishioners, and vice versa.

To provide information on important matters in an appropriate manner to facilitate and encourage informed comment from interested individuals and groups.

Wentworth Parish Council aims to be an open and transparent Council who listen to their electorate and try to make a difference to their community within its power and financial constraints.

**INTRODUCTION**

All correspondence for the parish council should be sent to the parish council clerk in the first instance.

The clerk is the formal point of contact for the parish council, and all replies from the parish council will come through them, this also keeps communication lines simple

Each Parish Councillor has a duty to represent, without bias, the interest of the whole community. They will endeavour to do their best and are available to help parishioners with regards to matters relating to the parish of Wentworth. They may be contacted by email or telephone and a contact list is displayed on the Parish Council noticeboards around the village as well as the Parish Council Website.

If the matter is important, then contact the Parish Clerk by letter or email to ensure that the matter is brought before the Parish Council and dealt with in a suitable and professional manner.

**PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS**

**The Parish Council will meet at 6.30pm on every third Monday of the month (The Mechanics Village Hall Wentworth) except for the months of August, when Council do not meet.**

The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will be the May meeting when Councillors will elect the Chair and appoint the Vice Chair for the forthcoming year.

The Annual Parish Meeting (a meeting of the electorate) will take place in May each year.

The Parish Council will meet at The Mechanics Village Hall Wentworth, unless otherwise notified.

**PRESS RELATIONS**

Normally only the Parish Clerk and Chair issue press releases and comments to the local media, however when Parish Councillors provide information to the local media it needs to be made clear whether they are speaking on behalf of the Parish Council or as individuals.

**INVOLVEMENT IN PARTNERSHIPS**

Where appropriate the Parish Council has and will continue to liaise with other various organisations.

## **NOTICEBOARDS**

The following items will be displayed permanently:

Parish Councillors with contact details

Parish Council meeting dates for the year Notice of the annual audited accounts will be displayed when appropriate.

The Parish Council meeting notice will be displayed at least five days in advance of the meeting.

Notices for Parishioners will be displayed as and when appropriate.

## **PARISH NEWSLETTER**

Parish Councillors will provide Council updates for the Wentworth newsletter when needed. Appropriate notices will be published as and when required.

## **SOCIAL NETWORKING**

Members of staff or Parish Councillors using social networking through their personal or professional lives must not comment on the activities of the Parish Council to ensure that the Code of Conduct is not breached.

The Parish Clerk will monitor the Parish Council's social media channels but constant monitoring is not possible and the Clerk will not be able to reply individually to all messages or comments received.

However, the Clerk will endeavour to ensure that any emerging themes or helpful suggestions are passed to the relevant people or authorities.

In order to ensure that all discussions on the Council page are productive, respectful and consistent with the Parish Council's aims and objectives, please follow these guidelines:

- Be considerate and respectful of others. Vulgarity, threats or abusive language will not be tolerated.
- Differing opinions and discussion of diverse ideas are encouraged, but personal attacks on anyone, including the Councillors or staff, will not be permitted.
- Share freely and be generous with official Parish Council posts but be aware of copyright laws; be accurate and give credit where credit is due.
- Stay on topic.
- Refrain from using the Council's Facebook page for commercial purposes or to advertise market or sell products. Sending a message/post via Facebook or Twitter will not be considered as contacting the Council for official purposes and we will not be obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through these channels. Instead, please contact the Parish Clerk and/or Councillors by emailing direct.

The Council retains the right to remove comments or content that includes:

- Obscene or racist content
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Potentially libellous statements.
- Plagiarised material; any material in violation of any laws, including copyright
- Private, personal information published without consent
- Information or links unrelated to the content of the page
- Commercial promotions or spam.

The Parish Council's response to any communication received not meeting the above criteria will be to either ignore, inform the sender of the policy, or send a brief response as appropriate. This will be at the Council's discretion based on the message received, given our limited resources available.

Any information posted on the WhatsApp page not in line with the above criteria will be removed as quickly as practically possible. Repeat offenders will be blocked from the WhatsApp page.

The Council may post a statement that 'A post breaching the Council's Social Media Policy has been removed' If the post alleges a breach of a Council's policy or the law the person who posted it will be asked to submit a formal complaint to the Council or report the matter to the Police as soon as possible to allow due process.

## **PARISH WEBSITE**

The following items will be permanently available:

- Parish Councillors names
- Parish Council meeting dates for the year
- The approved Parish Council Minutes (uploaded within one week of approval)
- The Council's Publication Scheme (a document which details information which can be requested from the Parish Council)
- Parish Council policies.

The Parish Clerk will ensure that all Parish Council information included on the Website is regularly updated.

Please see the Website Policy for more information on how the Council manages its website.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

All correspondence relating to the Parish should be addressed to the Parish Clerk in the first instance.

This will ensure that the matter is recorded and passed to the relevant person or organisation as soon as practicably possible. If a Parishioner wishes a matter to be formally discussed at a Parish Council meeting, then the Parish Clerk must be notified in writing at least 7 days prior to the meeting to enable the item to be placed on the Agenda.

## **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

The Annual Parish Meeting is held so that parishioners can have the opportunity to listen to the progress of the Parish Council over the last year and have the opportunity to debate local issues and celebrate local events and activities.

## **GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR)**

Please refer to the Parish Council's policies on GDPR for more information on how your personal data is managed.

## **COMMENTS**

Any comments or queries regarding this document should be made to the Parish Clerk.

**Adopted by Council May 2024**

**Review date May 2025**