

Dunnington Parish Council

Terms of Reference: Communications Group

Definition

The Communications Group shall consist of representatives from the Parish Council and the Parish Clerk (ex-officio).

Purpose

The purpose of the Communications Group is to effectively communicate and publicise the work of the Parish Council to the local community and stakeholders.

Roles and Responsibilities

The group is responsible for creating news articles for the Council's website, managing social media platforms, and drafting official communications on behalf of the Council.

The group will take the lead in preparing and drafting content, while the Parish Clerk provides oversight and has responsibility for publication.

Content Creation

- Create engaging and informative news articles about the activities, decisions, and initiatives of the Parish Council for publication on the Council's website.
- Ensure articles are clear, concise, and accessible for a wide audience.
- Collaborate with other Council members, committees, and community groups to gather content.

Social Media Management

- Draft posts and provide supporting materials for the Council's social media accounts, including but not limited to Facebook.
- Suggest themes, campaigns, and items for sharing to increase community engagement.
- Posts will focus on factual updates, announcements, and news, not opinion or debate.
- The Parish Clerk has responsibility for account management and is the only officer authorised to publish or remove posts.
- Comments and public replies will be disabled on all official accounts, so social media will be used solely as an information channel.
- While personal engagement with residents is welcome, Councillors must not post or comment in a way that suggests they are speaking on behalf of the Parish Council. All official Council communication should be issued only through the Council's official channels, managed by the Clerk.

Official Communications

- Draft press releases, statements, and letters, on behalf of the Parish Council.
- Collaborate with Council members and the Parish Clerk to ensure accuracy and consistency.
- Review and proofread official communications to ensure accuracy, clarity, and consistency.

Terms of Reference

The Communications Group shall be formed of no more than four members of the parish council, who are appointed at the Annual Parish meeting, and the Parish Clerk, who shall serve as an ex-officio member.

The Communications Group shall not meet formally but instead communicate and collaborate via email. Members of the Communications Group shall maintain regular email correspondence to exchange updates, seek input, and address relevant matters.

The Communications Group has no decision-making authority. Any proposals or recommendations must be presented to the full Parish Council for discussion or approval before implementation.

The Parish Clerk provides oversight of all communications and has the final authority to approve and publish content, ensuring that all outputs reflect Council decisions and policies.

Non-contentious, routine updates prepared by the Group may be approved and published by the Clerk without needing to return to full Council.

Social Media Guidance: Dunnington Parish Council

Purpose of the Council's Social Media

- To inform residents about the Parish Council's activities, decisions, and services.
- To promote local events, consultations, and opportunities.
- To share updates from relevant local partners and organisations.
- To strengthen communication and trust with the local community.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Communications Group drafts and suggests content for social media.
- The Parish Clerk supervises all social media activity and has the final authority to approve, publish, and, where necessary, remove content.
- The Clerk also manages account settings, security, and access.
- This approach ensures content is community-driven while maintaining accountability and compliance with regulations.

Standards for Posts

- Content must be factual, impartial, and written in plain, accessible language.
- Posts should be professional in tone, avoiding personal opinion or political bias.
- Material must comply with data protection and copyright requirements.
- All content is subject to the Clerk's review and approval before publication.

Community Interaction

- Comments and public replies on the Council's social media accounts will be disabled.
- Residents who wish to raise questions, provide feedback, or contact the Council should do so via the Parish Clerk's official contact details or through public meetings.
- Councillors must not post or comment on social media in a way that could suggest they are speaking on behalf of the Council. This ensures all Council communications are consistent and issued through the official channels.
- This approach ensures communication is handled consistently, respectfully, and in line with the Council's Code of Conduct.

Safeguards

- Councillors must not use the Council's social media accounts for personal or political purposes.
- During election periods, content must follow pre-election publicity ("purdah") rules.
- Important announcements will also be reflected in Council minutes or on the website to ensure a permanent public record.