

Lydiard Millicent Parish Council Communications Policy

Lydiard Millicent Parish Council believes in open pro-active communication with the press and/or public when delivering services. We strive to communicate effectively, appropriately and in a timely fashion.

Communication

Press reports and all communication to the public from the Parish Council, Committees or Working Parties should be from the Parish Clerk, after consultation between the Chairman and the Clerk.

Councillors who are asked for comment by the press or members of the public, should ask that it be clearly reported that it is their personal view.

For the sake of clarity, this is intended to mean that ONLY the Parish Clerk can properly represent the Council.

It also recognises that Councillors have four main areas of responsibility:

- determining the policies of the Council and giving it public leadership,
- monitoring and reviewing the performance of the Council in implementing policies and delivering services,
- representing the Council externally, and
- acting as advocates on behalf of their constituents.

These can conflict at times, particularly the last two, and this is why Councillors must take care when representing themselves to the press and/or the public.

Complaints

If Councillors have a complaint or receive a complaint from a member of the public about the Council or its activities, this should be presented to the Clerk in written format, to be dealt with under the complaints procedure, or via a Parish Council agenda item. The person's name and address should be on record.

Social Media

The type of content the Parish Council will accept on its social media pages are that a post may not be published or may be deleted if they meet any of these criteria:

- Comments that are not topical to the article being discussed
- Comments that are politically motivated
- Profane language or content
- Material that perpetuates or promotes discrimination of protected characteristics
- These characteristics can include but are not limited to, race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership or gender reassignment;
- Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- Solicitation of commerce;
- Illegal conduct or encouragement/support of illegal activities;
- Information that compromises or may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- Content that violates the legal ownership interests of any other party.

The Parish Council reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law.

Communication Checklist

Given the varied nature of the services delivered by the Parish Council not all of the following will apply in every situation. We will strive however to use the following as a communication checklist whenever services are developed and/or rolled out:

1. If a particular area in Lydiard Millicent is more affected than another, then details of the proposed scheme/service will be notified in writing to all residential and business premises in the immediate vicinity of the area affected.
2. The proposed scheme/service will be advised to known relevant organisations (residents/business organisations/interest groups) that may have an interest in the scheme. Indeed, those Councillors who have been delegated with the responsibility to work up details of the proposed scheme/service may invite representatives of such groups to assist in the development of the scheme/service.
3. Details will be communicated to the general public in the following ways:
 - Via the Parish Council Website
 - Via the Parish Council Facebook page
 - Inclusion in the Parish magazine (note that the publication timetable delays may sometimes make this impractical)
 - On Parish Council noticeboard
4. Subject to the agreement of the Council, the Parish Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council, will issue a press release to the local press. This may include, but is not limited to, the Swindon Advertiser and the Wilts Gazette & Herald.
5. A public meeting will be arranged, if appropriate, to solicit residents' comments.
6. Other means of ensuring a popular local mandate (e.g. a referendum, survey or similar mechanism) will only be considered should the nature of the scheme/service being delivered warrant the relatively significant costs involved in obtaining one.
7. A response to a planning application will be made to the Local Planning Authority if applicable.
8. All or any of the above may be repeated should there be any significant amendment to the scheme/service being delivered. In other words, the Parish Council is committed to providing updates as and when appropriate.

Adopted by Lydiard Millicent Parish Council on 13 March 2025