

Thelbridge Parish Council

Communications Strategy

INTRODUCTION

The Parish Council is the part of local government closest to its population, with Mid Devon District Council serving a larger area and Devon County Council concerned with the whole county. This strategy outlines the means by which the Parish Council intends to communicate with the residents of the Parish. It should be noted that the Parish Council is not in any way associated with the church and should not be confused with the Parochial Parish Council, which is an executive committee of the Church of England.

All communications must be timely, courteous and professional reflecting the policies and decisions of the Parish Council.

AIMS OF THE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

1. Better communication with residents
2. Increased awareness of the Parish Council and its role
3. Improved two-way communication providing more insight into local views, resulting in evidence based decision making
4. Provide relevant and timely information
5. Use of a range of media to improve transparency and maximise access to information

NOTICES OF MEETINGS

Agenda for meetings are posted on the notice boards in Nomansland at least three days before the meeting. They are also available on the website.

WEBSITE

A website was created for the Parish Council early in 2017 and provides access to the meeting documents, the Parish Council's policies, local news items etc. To improve accessibility and since BT withdrew their free offering, the website was moved to the free HugoFox offering, the website address is <http://thelbridge-pc.gov.uk>

Information is also held by Mid Devon District Council at <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/your-council/town-parish-councils/thelbridge/> and kept up to date by the Parish Council.

All forms of communication must promote the website.

NEWSLETTERS

Starting in early 2018 publication of an annual newsletter delivered to all parish households began, since it is known that all residents will not have access to email or the internet. This will be used to provide general information, but also to promote attendance at the annual

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meeting. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, newsletters have been distributed by second class post.

From time to time a short piece about the Parish Council is included in the Witheridge Voice. This is free of charge.

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Parish Council, usually held in May, is an opportunity to engage with residents. To widen the appeal and interest in attending the meeting, where possible a speaker will be invited to talk about a subject of local interest. This will be advertised through the website and newsletters (see above).

MEDIA – PRESS, TV, RADIO

Press releases or other media communications must be approved by the Parish Clerk and Chairman.

SOCIAL MEDIA

There are many forms of social media which are constantly evolving. At present Facebook is the key service for targeting the over 55 age group with Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp etc. are more relevant for those over 25. Younger people tend to favour Snapchat, which is not suitable for business purposes.

Councillors must not use social media in relation to Parish Council business and, at present, resourcing the maintenance and control of a social media presence is not considered to be feasible or cost effective.

CORRESPONDENCE

Replies to letters/emails should be prompt and always through the Parish Clerk.

Councillors may receive enquiries from the public in person, by telephone or through written correspondence. In the case of written (letter or email) correspondence the councillor should acknowledge its receipt and indicate what action will be taken; however no promises should be made. Responses maybe:

- The matter will be referred to the Parish Clerk
- A request will be made to include the matter on a future meeting agenda
- Research into the matter is required before any further action can be taken

Whatever action is taken, the enquirer must be kept informed.