

BARTON PARISH COUNCIL

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Adopted by a resolution of Barton Parish Council on *2nd September* 2025

1. Aims

The aim of this policy is to set out a strategy to ensure that communication systems and procedures are understood and that information is shared consistently and efficiently between all stakeholders. The strategy also seeks to consider further potential opportunities to develop communication systems in the future.

2. Objectives

- To provide information on important matters affecting the community and to encourage informed comment from interested individuals or groups.
- To establish clear and easy channels of communication.
- To ensure the Parish Council is aware of and responds in a timely manner to what the residents of Barton want and need to know.
- To use a variety of digital and traditional communication methods to make sure information is provided and accessible to the whole community.
- To ensure that messages are relevant, clear and factual between the Parish Council and the community.

For the purpose of this policy, communication systems are divided into three broad sections:

- Communications between the Parish Council and Barton residents.
- Communications between councillors, and between councillors and the clerk.
- Communications with the wider community.

In all forms of communication, the Council will:

- be considerate and respectful of others, not use language that is discriminatory, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, or offensive.,
- not knowingly make false or misleading statements.
- reflect the views of the Parish Council not the individual.
- make communication as accessible as possible.

a) Communications between the Parish Council and Barton Residents

The Clerk has overall responsibility for overseeing all communication with members of the community and outside bodies. The point of contact for the Parish Council is the Clerk, and all correspondence should be sent to him/her.

Official correspondence sent by the Clerk will be on Barton Parish Council letter headed paper.

Barton residents will be kept well informed of the work of the Parish Council and be well prepared for forthcoming events and projects. Established and known methods for communicating with residents include: notice boards; website; the Parish Magazine; and meetings. Occasionally other methods are used to reinforce publicity and act as reminders, including leafleting and posters.

Notice Boards

There is currently only one official Parish Council (PC) notice board which is by the village pond and shops. There are five further notice boards used to disseminate information. These are located on New Road (near the alleyway), Roman Hill (on the junction between Roman Hill and Cambridge Road), Wimpole Road (on the corner near the White Horse Public House), Wimpole Road (on the outskirts of the village leading to Lordsbridge), and finally on the corner of Mailes Close (off the High Street). The PC noticeboard will display the minutes, agendas, planning notices and occasional Parish Council notices. The clerk will post notices and other councillors may be asked to assist as necessary.

Parish Council Website

The Parish Council website www.bartonvillage.org primarily communicates Parish Council information to the public. It also provides other relevant community information, some of which may have been provided, or requested by members of the public.

The website manager, a councillor appointed by the PC, will be the sole arbitrator of website content, and if absent the Clerk, to determine the appropriateness of items requested to be included by members of the public. On occasions, where items to be included may be deemed sensitive or controversial, the decision to display the item will be referred to all councillors. All information to be uploaded to the website will be done as soon as possible.

The clerk is responsible for uploading agendas (five clear working days), minutes (within 24hrs of being approved by the Parish Council) and current planning applications. The information to be circulated prior to PC meetings will be posted in the Councillors Only section of the website and will be the responsibility of councillors to access prior to the PC meeting.

One other councillor will be available to upload items to the website in instances where the website manager and/or clerk are unavailable to carry out this job.

Those responsible for uploading items to the website will endeavour to ensure that the website is kept up-to-date and councillors will monitor this.

A review of the website will be carried out annually to ensure that it is set up to enable efficient access to different areas. Associated training will be sought to facilitate the ongoing review and introduce one or two additional councillors to website management.

The Parish Magazine

The Parish Council writes a monthly report, drafted by the clerk, from the most recent Parish Council meeting for the Parish magazine. The content of which will include, points from the minutes, public

concerns that are raised, consultations and any general information thought to be of benefit to the public.

Other occasional Parish Council reports, notifications of forthcoming events and progress of on-going projects will be published by the Parish Council. Such articles may have been drafted by an individual councillor but should be shared with all councillors before being published and signed off under the title '*Parish Council*'. These items will be uploaded onto the website.

Meetings

Barton residents are welcome to attend all meetings of the PC and are informed of times, dates and location via the Parish Council noticeboard, the website and in the Parish Magazine.

There may be occasions when meetings have to be held virtually but residents will be informed of this and the procedure to participate.

b) Communications between Councillors, and between Councillors and the Clerk

As the Parish Council is a corporate body, its decisions are the responsibility of the whole council and therefore all councillors have a responsibility to be well informed. Key systems to ensure that this happens:

- Email communication will be used as the most efficient means of communicating between councillors, and between councillors and the clerk. Parish Councillors will be provided with a dedicated Parish Council email address which must be used for all Parish Council business only.
- The clerk will forward to all councillors emails from South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridge County Council and all others of a routine nature.
- Emails between councillors, and between the clerk and councillors should indicate whether the email is **for information only** (FYI) or whether it requires a **response**. Where a response is required it should be made to **REPLY ALL**.
- The Parish Council has a number of working groups. Notes and reports from the working groups will be circulated to all Parish Councillors and the Clerk, no later than 5 days before the next Parish Council meeting.
- 5 days before a meeting, the clerk will provide councillors with digital copies of the agenda, any supporting documentation and draft minutes of the previous meeting. These will be uploaded to the Councillors Only area of the website.
- An induction procedure will be provided for new councillors consisting of:
 - a copy of the Good Councillors' Guide and the Council's code of conduct;
 - signposting to the council's website for policies and other documentation;
 - a Parish Council email address for council business.

c) Communications with the Wider Community

The Parish Council will be proactive in developing further opportunities to communicate with the local and wider community through a wide range of means. This may include surveys, subscribing to news information channels, participating in action groups (Speedwatch, Neighbourhood Plan), public meetings, attending the Local Liaison Forum (LLF) meetings and County Council Meetings as a representative of Barton Parish Council.

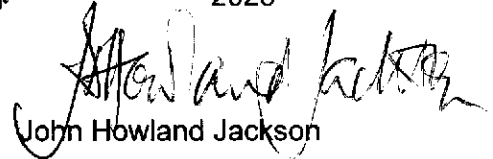
Communications with the Media

Communications with the Media

Any communication with the press will be cleared and agreed by the Parish Council and will represent the view of 'The Council' not individual councillors.

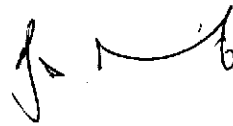
If the Council adds social media to the channels of communication as it seeks to improve and expand the services it delivers this Policy will be updated to reflect the new arrangements.

Approved and adopted by Barton Parish Council on 2nd September 2025



John Howland Jackson

Chairperson



Ian Minto
Clerk