



# Broseley Town Council

## Communications Policy

### Introduction

Broseley Town Council has a duty to engage with its residents, partners, employees and stakeholders by communicating effectively. This policy sets out the objectives of the Town Council and the best way that Broseley Town Council can achieve this, both in terms of clear messages and staff/volunteer time.

### 1. What should the Council be communicating?

- Services provided by the Council
- Meeting schedules
- Meeting agendas and minutes
- Council performance
- Local event information (with Council involvement and without if relevant to residents)
- Updates/changes to local services not provided by the Council e.g bus services, Friendly Bus, Citizens Advice.

### 2. Who should we be communicating with?

- Residents
- Town Council employees
- Town Councillors
- Hard-to-reach groups (inc. elderly, housebound, young people)
- The media (Shropshire Star / The Journal)
- Shropshire Council
- Voluntary groups and organisations
- The business community
- MPs
- Public sector service providers (Police, Health, Fire)
- Local schools

### 3. How should we be communicating?

- Website
- Newsletter: Town Talk
- Annual Report
- Public Consultation
  - Questionnaires
  - Direct letters
- Public notice boards
- Library
- Press releases : What's What Magazine, Shropshire Star, etc

#### 4. Dissemination of Council documents

- a. **Annual Report:** once a formal draft has been written and approved by the Town Council this will be published and distributed to households throughout the town. A copy will also be held for public view at the Council offices, at the Library and on the website.
- b. **Meeting agendas & Council minutes:** agendas and supporting documentation should be emailed / delivered to Councillors at least three clear working days before the meeting date. A copy will also be displayed on the website and on public notice boards. The local Police Officer and local press will also be sent a copy.

Draft minutes should be made available to all present at the meeting. Once signed off at the next meeting these minutes should be made available to the general public with a copy available to read or download on the website. Council minutes should also be available in the Council folder at the Library.

- c. **Policy documents:** all Councillors should be in receipt of all Council policies. All relevant policies should also be available to the public via the website and the office.

#### 5. Dissemination of Community Information

- a. **Town Talk:** this publication includes both Council and community information directly relating to residents of the town. This will be published quarterly and will be prepared by the Town Clerk with input from Town Councillors.
- b. **Local community groups (Broseley in Bloom, Christmas Lights etc):** the Town Council will provide communications support by including information about events within Town Talk, on public notice boards and the website, and any other way deemed appropriate.
- c. **Broseley Quarterly:** the Town Clerk will liaise with the publisher regarding suitable content.
- d. **What's What Magazine:** the Town Clerk will liaise with the publisher regarding lead times and prepare contributions and relevant press releases with input from Councillors

#### 6. Communicating with the Media

##### a. Media enquiry: Council matters

The Town Clerk may provide factual information relating to minuted Council policies and decisions.

In the event of an enquiry requiring a more detailed response or addressing a sensitive matter, the Clerk (Clerk's office) should take the full contact details and respond in writing promptly. This will allow time to give consideration to the questions asked, giving a full and accurate response.

The Town Clerk will agree a statement with the Mayor or the relevant committee Chair and any reference to an individual Councillor must be agreed with that individual prior to release.

##### b. Media enquiry: Public events

The Town Clerk (Clerk's office) will provide as much factual information as available from marketing material and endeavour to provide press with the appropriate contacts or website links for events / news relating to the Broseley community.

## **7. Releasing statements to the media / public**

The Council's public statements will reflect its policies and decisions as set out in Council minutes.

Any Councillor or officer may draft a public statement, but such statements should only be released by the Clerk. All public statements should be in writing and preferably in a Press Release Pro Forma.

In the event of any verbal statements being made to press then a written record should be made.

Individual Councillors may comment either in public or to the media provided:

- a. They follow the Council's Code of Conduct.
- b. They make it clear they are commenting as an individual.
- c. They do not misrepresent the policies and decisions of the Council, or the views of their fellow Councillors.

## **8. Internal communications**

Staff and Councillors play a crucial role in building a Council's reputation. Whether they are frontline staff or representing the Council externally, the way they behave and how they talk about the Council has a huge impact. Good internal communications are therefore very important in helping a Council to achieve its objectives and generate positive perceptions in the local community.

December 2013

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