

HILTON PARISH COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE POLICY

Adopted 7th October 2013

Introduction and Description of Terms

The Parish Council welcomes correspondence from parishioners.

The Correspondence Policy for the Parish Council covers two broad areas. The first relates to general correspondence, the second relates to frequent and/or vexatious correspondents.

Frequent correspondents are those who in the opinion of the Clerk and the Chairman (and in his/her absence, vice-chair) have consumed an excessive amount of the council's time. Vexatious correspondents are those who continue to raise subjects that have already been dealt with, who raise matters that are petty or correspondents who cause distress or annoyance.

It is accepted that correspondence can be received in various forms. This policy refers to correspondence received by letter, electronic mail/messaging, through publishing in local newspapers and magazines and via the telephone.

General Correspondence

The Clerk to the Council and individual councillors will endeavour to reply to all correspondence no later than 15 working days from receipt. Where a subject matter requires further research that prevents a reply within 15 working days, then a holding reply will be issued within the initial 15-day period.

Correspondence received from Persistent and/or Vexatious Correspondents

Where an individual or individuals have been identified and named as Persistent and/or Vexatious Correspondents (see Introduction and Description of Terms and Note 1), the Council will place them on a register. The Clerk will then inform the individual(s) that they have been placed on the register, send them a copy of this policy and implement the following measures:

- a. The named individual(s) will only be permitted to correspond with the PC on matters relating to the PC through one route. That route will be by letter sent through the Royal Mail addressed to the Clerk to the PC. They will not be permitted to communicate directly with individual councillors.
- b. The named individual(s) shall not attempt to correspond with the Clerk nor with individual councillors on matters relating to the PC through electronic mail, through publishing in local newspapers and magazines or via the telephone. Should they attempt to do so, neither the Clerk nor councillors will be under any obligation to respond.

- c. The Clerk will endeavour to reply to such correspondence no later than 15 working days.
- d. Correspondence that contains enquiries that have already been dealt with fully by the Clerk (repetitive enquiries) will not receive a further response. Only correspondence that raises new issues will receive a reply.

Note 1

The following procedure will be implemented to place individuals on the Register of Persistent and/or Vexatious Correspondents:

- a. Persistent and/or Vexatious Correspondents can only be nominated following a joint consultation between the Clerk and the Chairman. Should the Chairman be unavailable then the Vice Chairman will deputise for him/her.
- b. That nomination will then be put to the Council, voted on and only accepted provided there is a majority decision.
- c. The register of individuals identified as Persistent and/or Vexatious Correspondents will be held by the Clerk.
- d. At any time, any councillor or the Clerk can request that a named individual be removed from the Register of Persistent and/or Vexatious Correspondents. That request will then be put to the next monthly meeting of the Council but that individual's name will only be removed by a majority decision.
- e. Whenever the Council discusses either the placement on or the removal of an individual from the Register of Persistent and/or Vexatious Correspondents, members of the public will be excluded from the meeting. The minutes of the meeting will not name that individual.