

# Hawthorn Parish Council

## Protocol for Dealing with E-mail / Correspondence and Verbal Comments from Residents

Hawthorn Parish Council had adopted this protocol for dealing with all communications from other authorities , groups and residents.

Adopted May 2020, amended May 2022.

### 1 Letters to the Clerk

All letters to the Clerk will be added to the next agenda – in line with giving the appropriate notice and LGA 1972. This mean that no correspondence received at a meeting or after the agenda for that meeting has been published , will be discussed at that meeting but will be added to the next agenda.

### 2 Letters to Councillors

All letters to Councillors will be forwarded to the Clerk. Again, such cannot be discussed at a meeting unless already included on the agenda. Otherwise, they will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

### 3 E – mails to the Clerk

With the increase in popularity of e-mail considerable amounts of the clerk's time is now being taken up dealing with e-mail correspondence.

#### 3.1 Procedure

When an e-mailed is received the clerk will action it in one of the following ways:

- a. If it is a routine enquiry about a task the clerk is delegated to deal without consulting the Council (see below) the clerk will acknowledge receipt of the e-mail, deal with the query and notify the sender within 14 days as to what action has been taken.
- b. If an e-mail is received about an issue which is not one of the tasks delegated to the clerk, the clerk will acknowledge receipt of the e-mail and will notify the sender of the date of the meeting when it will be discussed.
- c. The e-mail will also be forwarded on to all the parish councillors.
- d. The sender may if they wish, attend the meeting and may speak during the Public Participation item to comment further on their e mail, and can then listen whilst the Council then discuss the email. However this is not a question and answer time – this opportunity is the Annual Parish Meeting – which is a meeting of the electors and generally held on the third Monday of March.
- e. Any decisions made at the meeting will be included in the minutes which will be published on the Council's website – usually within 14 days of the meeting.
- f. Individual responses to e-mails will not routinely be sent unless the Council feels it is appropriate in specific cases.
- g. The Council will not respond to vexatious, abusive or threatening e-mails.
- h. Any e-mails sent to individual councillors will be forwarded to the clerk to include on the next agenda

### 3.2 Designated for action by the Clerk

Responsibility for the following matters has been delegated to the clerk:

- Highway matters:
  - reporting potholes,
  - blocked drains,
  - broken road signs
  - requesting road sweeping,
  - organising grit piles.
- Reporting faulty street lights.
- Rights of way: reporting problems with footpaths, faulty stiles etc.
- Obtaining information required by the Council.

### 4 E mails to Councillors

All relevant emails to individual Councillors will be forwarded to the Clerk who will take the appropriate action as per the above.

### 5 Telephone calls and verbal comments to the Clerk / Individual Councillors

#### 5.1 Calls / comments to the Clerk : Information only

The Clerk will report back all relevant information to the next appropriate meeting.

#### 5.2 Calls to the Clerk : Seeking information

The Clerk will answer all requests for information, if possible, at the time. If more complicated – the Clerk will ask that the request for information is put into writing – where it will then be subject to the FOI procedures and answered appropriately.

#### 5.3 Calls / comments to Councillors

Councillors have a very relevant role in listening to local residents and also keeping them up to date with information. However they should not feel intimidated in any way.

All Councillors can

- Ask for an item to be added to the agenda for the next meeting – if they feel it is appropriate.
- Suggest to the resident that they put their comments / questions into writing and forward to the Clerk. In this way these will be added to the agenda for the next meeting ( subject to notice etc as above) and the resident can attend the meeting and speak under public participation.