

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.