

Halton Holegate with Halton Fenside Parish Council

Communications Policy

November 2025

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1. Council Correspondence

The point of contact for Halton Hologate with Halton Fenside Parish Council is the Parish Clerk, and it is to the Parish Clerk that all correspondence for the Council should be addressed.

The Parish Clerk shall deal with all correspondence following a meeting.

No individual Councillor or Officer shall be the sole custodian of any correspondence or information in the name of the Parish Council, a Committee, Sub-Committee or Working Party. In particular, Councillors and Officers do not have a right to obtain confidential information/documentation unless they can demonstrate a 'need to know'.

All official correspondence should be sent by the Clerk in the name of the Parish Council using Council letter headed paper.

Where correspondence from the Parish Clerk to a Councillor is copied to another person, the addressee should be made aware that a copy is being forwarded to that other person (e.g. copy to XX).

2. Agenda Items for Council, Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Parties

Agenda items are controlled by the relevant section of the Parish Council's Standing Orders.

Agenda items should be clear and concise. They should contain sufficient information to enable Councillors to make an informed decision, and for the public to understand what matters are being considered and what decisions are to be taken at a meeting.

Items for information should be kept to a minimum on an Agenda. Where the Parish Clerk or a Councillor wishes fellow Councillors to receive matters for 'information only', this information will be circulated via the Parish Clerk.

3. Communications with the Press and Public

The Parish Clerk will clear all press reports, or comments to the media, with the Chair of the Council or the Chair of the relevant Committee.

Press reports from the Council, its Committees or Working Parties should be from the Parish Clerk or an Officer or via the reporter's own attendance at a meeting. Reports from Officers should be sent to the Parish Clerk who will clear them and send them to the press.

Unless a Councillor has been authorised by the Parish Council to speak to the media on a particular issue, Councillors who are asked for comment by the press should make it clear that it is a personal view and ask that it be clearly reported as their personal view.

Unless a Councillor is absolutely certain that they are reporting the view of the Council, they must make it clear to members of the public that they are expressing a personal view.

If Councillors receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be dealt with under the Council's adopted Complaints Procedure, or via a Council Agenda item.

4. Media Councillor Correspondence to External Parties

As the Parish Clerk should be sending most of the Council's correspondence from a Councillor to other bodies, it needs to be made clear that it is written in their official capacity and has been authorised by Halton Holegate with Halton Fenside Parish Council.

A copy of all outgoing correspondence relating to the Council or a Councillor's role within it, should be sent to the Clerk, and it be noted on the correspondence, e.g. 'copy to the Parish Clerk' so that the recipient is aware that the Clerk has been advised.

5. Communications with Parish Council Staff

Parish Councillors must not give instructions to any member of staff unless authorised to do so (e.g. two or more Councillors sitting as a Committee or Sub-Committee with appropriate delegated powers from the Council, as detailed in the Council's Standing Orders).

No individual Councillor, regardless of whether or not they are the Chair of the Council, the Chair of a Committee or other meeting, or are styled 'Leader' of the Council, may give instructions to the Parish Clerk, or to another employee, which are inconsistent or conflict with Council decisions or arrangements for delegated power.

Telephone calls should be appropriate to the work of the Parish Council.

Emails

- Instant replies should not be expected from the Parish Clerk. Reasons for urgency should be stated.
- Information to Councillors should normally be directed via the Parish Clerk.
- Emails from Councillors to external parties should be copied to the Parish Clerk.
- Councillors should acknowledge their emails when requested to do so.

Meetings with the Parish Clerk or other Officers

- Wherever possible an appointment should be made.
- Meetings should be relevant to the work of that particular Officer.
- Councillors should be clear that the matter is legitimate Council business and not matters driven by personal or political agendas.

6. Social Media

Social Media and Electronic Communications are covered in a separate Parish Council Policy.