



MSG PARISH COUNCIL

Communications Policy

AIMS

- To establish clear, easy to use channels of communication between the Parish Council and the Parishioners, and vice versa.
- To provide information on important matters in an appropriate manner to facilitate and encourage informed comment from interested individuals and groups.

INTRODUCTION

Each Parish Councillor has a duty to represent, without bias, the interest of the whole community. They will endeavour to do their best and be available to help parishioners with matters relating to the Parish of Middleton St George. They may be contacted by email. If the matter is important, then a letter or email to the Parish Clerk will ensure that this will be brought before the Parish Council and dealt with in a suitable and professional manner. It is the Parish Council's intention to comply with the schedule as below.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Parish Council will meet at 6.30pm on second Monday of the month unless affected by public holidays in which case alternative dates will be promulgated.

The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will be in May when Councillors will elect the Chair and appoint the Vice Chair for the forthcoming year.

An Annual Parish Assembly may take place in May, if the Parish Council considers appropriate. This will be an opportunity for the Parish Council to meet with the members of the Parish in a more informal setting. The Annual Parish Assembly is held so that parishioners can have the opportunity to listen to the progress of the Parish Council over the last year and have an opportunity to debate local issues and celebrate local events and activities.

The Parish Council, as well as its committees, will meet in the Parish Meeting Room. All meetings of the Parish Council, as well as its committees, are open to members of the public. Members of the public may submit questions in advance of the meeting to the Parish Clerk, or request to speak during an item at the discretion of the Chairs and in accordance with Standing Orders.

CONTACT DETAILS

The following items will be displayed on the Parish website and noticeboards:

- Parish Councillors names and email addresses
- Parish Council meetings dates for the year
- Notice of the annual audited accounts will be displayed when appropriate.
- Notices for Parishioners will be displayed as and when appropriate.
- The Parish Council meeting notices.

RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA

All statements to the press or other media, oral or written, on behalf of MSGPC shall only be given by the Chair or with his or her knowledge and permission, or in his or her absence, the Vice Chair. All such statements should reflect the position of the Parish Council. Where any statements provided to the press/media by the Chair or Vice-Chair do not have the endorsement of the Parish Council, and are the personal views, this must be stated. It is recommended that where such statements are given, they should if possible be written with a record kept of the statement.

LIAISON WITH WARD AND OTHER EXTERNAL COUNCILLORS

An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the councillors of Darlington Borough Council, who are representing MSG Parish wards. Unless the Council otherwise orders, a copy of the Minutes of Meetings shall be sent to the Councillors of Darlington Borough Council, who are representing MSG Parish wards.

The councillors representing Darlington Borough Council may speak at the normal Parish Council Meetings, at the discretion of the Chair, in the same capacity as members of the public. Where possible, it would assist the Parish Council greatly, if Ward Councillors could provide written reports to the Parish Council on issues that are of joint concern.

Unless the Parish Council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to Darlington Borough Council shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the council.

OTHER BODIES

Representatives of other bodies may be invited to attend Parish Council Meetings. Such invitations shall be at the instruction of the Chair and issued and arranged by the Clerk. Representatives of other bodies may be allowed to make presentations to the Parish Council, provided prior arrangements have been made, and the item and topic details are on the Meeting Agenda. The time allotted to representatives from invited guest/ bodies, shall be determined by the Chair.

The public shall be allowed to listen to visiting bodies unless the meeting has previously been deemed to be held in camera.

WEB SITE

A web site shall be run by the Clerk or a designated appointee, the content to be controlled by the Chair/Clerk. The web site is to contain all matters relating to MSGPC except any that are deemed to be of a sensitive nature. Only content agreed to at the Parish Council meeting shall be posted on the website. The web site should also act as a proactive interface with the Parish.

FACEBOOK PAGE

An official MSGPC Facebook Page shall be run by the Clerk or a designated appointee. The purpose of the Facebook Page is to share information posted on the website, to further act as a proactive interface with the Parish. As such, only content agreed to at the Parish Council meeting shall be posted on the Facebook Page.

NEWSLETTER

MSGPC may produce and distribute a Newsletter as and when required. An editor(s) shall be appointed by the Parish Council who shall ensure that all items for publication are approved by the Chair and reflect what has been agreed by the Parish Council.

CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence relating to the parish should be addressed to the Parish Clerk in the first instance (or to the Parish Council Chairman or Chairs of Committees, with a copy to the Parish Clerk). This will ensure that the matter is recorded and passed to the relevant person or organisation as soon as practicably possible. If a parishioner wishes a matter to be formally discussed at a Parish Council meeting, then the Parish Clerk must be notified at least ~~10~~ 7 days prior to the meeting to enable the item to be placed on the Agenda. The Clerk will respond on a matter as soon as is practically possible, following consideration by the Parish Council or its Committees, and will also deal with any FOI requests according to proper procedure.

NOTICE BOARDS

There are three notice boards in the Parish for the use of the Clerk. These are situated;

- Outside the Village Post Office in the Square.
- On The Front adjacent to the Bus Stop at Middleton One Row.
- At the entry to the Virginia Estate.