EMAIL PROTOCOL

The purpose of this protocol is to improve communication between members of the council and the Clerk and to make the business of the Council more efficient and effective.

More and more of council business is done between meetings and is either reported back to the council or is actioned by the Clerk on behalf of the council.

Often, decisions and actions need to be reviewed or amended between council meetings and, therefore, it is for councillors to respond in a timely manner to communications from the Clerk or other Councillors.

The Clerks email account is monitored hourly and the Clerk aims to respond as soon as is possible or within 2 working days.

Please remember that the Clerk is employed for 12 hours per week and instant replies should not be expected. However, an 'out of office' message should be used when the Clerk is not available.

Any emails sent to the Clerk, by a councillor, should be copied into the Chairman and Chairs of each committee.

The Clerk is responsible for dealing with email received and passing on relevant information to members or external agencies. The Clerk will mark, in the subject line, whether the email is:-

- **For Reading** - this may be important for a future meeting or as information to assist Councillors to make considered contributions
- **For response** by xx/xx/xx
- **Urgent** - a response a.s.a.p., a vote is required
- **F Y I** - For information only

As a courtesy to both the Clerk and to other fellow councillors, responses should be within the timeline set out by the clerk and copied to all if required.

Should no response be forthcoming within the given framework, the Clerk will make the assumption that councillors are in agreement with the request and suitable action will be taken to complete this action and then report back.

Responses do not need to be lengthy - a single word will suffice should a decision need to be made - yes/no; agree/disagree.

Adopted 28th October 2021
Review Date: October 2022

Correspondence from the Clerk marked ‘Confidential’ must be treated as such and not be disclosed to anyone. Emails from Councillors to external parties should always be copied to the Clerk.

Emails will be used to distribute information of council business.

General Guidance On The Use Of Email.

- Always ensure that your Recipient List is appropriate to avoid causing a nuisance to other colleagues.
- Always complete the Subject Line with a clear description of what the email is about as recipients cannot always distinguish between what they need to look at immediately and what can wait.
- Don’t be a novelist when composing an email. Ensure language is simple, unambiguous and to the point.
- Avoid using abbreviations and emoticons - don’t trade clarity for confusion.
- Be aware that other colleagues may not know the meaning of informal expressions, such as FWIW (for what it’s worth).
- Be polite. Terseness can be misinterpreted. Please and thank you go a long way.
- Be patient. Not everyone can respond immediately or necessarily have the confidence to communicate using email.
- Please respond to e mails from the Clerk or Councillor colleagues, if only to acknowledge the e mail, a lack of response is discourteous and can be misinterpreted.
- Be careful when replying to an email message with many recipients. Do you really want everyone to see your reply?
- Never reply in anger. Take a break or sleep on it before responding.
- Never write your email in CAPITAL LETTERS. This implies shouting.
- Don’t conduct an argument on email - it is unprofessional.
- Always read email before sending it and consider the resultant reaction.
- Ensuring clarity in the message is time well spent.
- Before you click Reply All or put names on the Cc or Bcc lines, ask yourself if all the recipients need the information in your message. If they don't, why send it? Take time to send your messages to the right people.