

Lower Beeding Parish Council

PROCEDURE FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to guide both Councillors and Officers of Lower Beeding Parish Council in how correspondence should generally be generated in such a way as to ensure the smooth running of the Council. It is designed to ensure consistency in the Council's approach and to comply with the Council's Standing Orders.

Above everything else, an Officer of the Council or a Councillor must act with integrity when responding to correspondence on behalf of the Council.

Receiving Correspondence

Under normal circumstances, the Clerk, as the Proper Officer of Lower Beeding Council is authorised to receive all correspondence.

Procedure for Receipt of Correspondence (By Phone, Email or Letter):

1. When required, acknowledge receipt of correspondence.
2. Reply, by phone, letter or email, standard reply within 5 days and 21 days to reply to the inquiry, if an additional 21 days is required the Clerk will advise accordingly.

Correspondence may be circulated as a background paper to an agenda item where appropriate and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018)

Correspondence will be sent electronically or will be available for Councillors to view at the Clerk's address by prior arrangement.

Responding to Correspondence

Either the Clerk or the Chairman may write correspondence relating to the stated business and day to day management of the activities or adopted policy of the Council.

Where members have been appointed to speak on projects on behalf of the Council, they may write confirming project arrangements or thanks. Copies of all correspondence must be held by the Clerk as the Proper Officer.

Where councillors respond to correspondence in a personal capacity they must make it clear that they are commenting in a personal capacity and not expressing the views of the Council. The name of the Council should not be cited either in any heading or sign off.

Email Correspondence

The Council has a generic email address for all correspondence clerk@lowerbeeding.com . All email correspondence is delivered to the Clerk's inbox.

Complaints (phone, email & letter)

1. Acknowledge receipt.
2. Follow the Complaints Procedure.

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Filing of Correspondence

Correspondence may be filed electronically within both the Parish Council email account and the Parish Council laptop or as a hard copy in the Clerk's Office.

The contents of the Parish Files are reviewed annually.

Retention of Correspondence

Correspondence with Lower Beeding Parish Council will be retained in accordance with its Retention of Documents Policy.

Freedom of Information Act 2000

By virtue of corresponding with the Parish Council, members of the public should be aware that their correspondence may be available in the public domain, subject to the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulations. There is a disclaimer on the Parish Council's website which states, *'Please note that correspondence to the Council may be released under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, subject to the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulations.'*