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**COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

**The Policy**

Uppingham Town Council is committed to high quality communication with the community of Uppingham, including listening and consultation as appropriate.

**Implementation**

It will implement this policy by following the implementation schedule, which outlines the communication methodology of the council.

**Policy Review**

The policy to be reviewed at least once during the lifetime of each council, with the operating schedule being considered at least annually, or more frequently as necessary both in terms of its implementation and suitability.

**Implementation Schedule**

Uppingham Town Council will implement their communications policy through the following strategies:

1. The maintenance of an informative, up to date, accurate and interactive website
2. The production, and delivery to all households, of a minimum of three written communications per year.
3. The maintenance of a minimum of two up to date notice boards strategically located.
4. To hold public meetings or one to one “surgeries” as required
5. The publication of a summary of Town Council meeting outcomes, as appropriate, following each full meeting of the Town Council in the local press and Town Council web site
6. The provision of an opportunity for the public to speak (given appropriate notice) during the

“democratic fifteen minutes” of Town Council meetings in accordance with the council’s

Standing Orders

1. Official communications with the press representing the Town Council are restricted to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and approved Press Officer (who may be the Clerk) or to other town councillors specifically mandated so to do over a particular issue.
2. Quarterly meetings with ward members
3. The Town Council will canvass opinions over matters of significance to the Town. It will choose methods of consultation appropriate to the subject and the population to be consulted, these may include:



* 1. Consultation with other representative bodies
  2. Councillor’s conversations with the community
  3. Public meetings
  4. Written communications
  5. Web Based consultation.
  6. Notices
  7. Other methods appropriate to the occasion.

1. Embracing social media such as Facebook, X, YouTube and LinkedIn to support the implementation schedule of the council. Social media accounts are to be controlled and maintained through the Clerk’s office and used in conjunction with a media policy summarising effective and appropriate use.

**Recording, photography and use of social media in Council meetings:**

1. The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 came into force on 6th August 2014. These regulations allow any member of the public who wishes to film, audio-record, take photographs and use social media such as tweeting and blogging, to report the proceedings of any meeting that is open to the public. Uppingham Town Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it conducts its main decision-making meetings. and has therefore developed a protocol to assist its citizens in this activity.

2. Access - to facilitate access to Council meetings, a designated area for those wishing to

record proceedings will be clearly sign-posted. This area will provide an unfettered view of

the meeting. Although there is no requirement to notify the Council in advance of the

intention to record a meeting, we respectfully ask those who are wishing to bring large

equipment to a meeting to contact us in advance so that necessary arrangements can be

made to accommodate this. Please email townclerk@uppinghamtowncouncil.co.uk to

confirm what arrangements are needed for access.

3. Open Meetings - access to record proceedings is only available to meetings, which are open

to the public. In limited defined circumstances, for example when confidential or exempt

items are discussed, some meetings may need to be held in private or move to a private

session during the meeting. In these cases, recording will not be permitted as the public will

be excluded for the relevant part of the meeting.

4. Commentary - any person can provide written commentary during a meeting, as well as oral

commentary outside or after the meeting. Oral commentary is not permitted during a

meeting as this would be disruptive to the good order to the meeting.

5. Although the Council supports the principles of freedom of speech, this should be exercised

with personal and social responsibility and be operated within the law. The Council requests

those participating not to edit recordings, film or photographs in any way that could lead to

misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes refraining from editing an image or views

expressed in a way that may ridicule or show a lack of respect towards those being

photographed, filmed or recorded.

6. Webcam or webcasts - there is no legal requirements for councils to webcast, but where

councils webcast any of their public meetings as a matter of good practice, the public will be

notified.

7. Private or closed sessions - Filming or audio recording is not allowed during private meetings

or private sessions. All recording equipment must be removed during these

sessions/meetings.

8. Disruptions - anyone wishing to record a meeting who acts in a disruptive manner may be at

risk of expulsion. Examples where this may be considered are:

• Moving outside the areas designated for recording without the consent of the Chair;

• Excessive noise in recording or setting up or re-siting equipment during the

debate/discussion;

• Intrusive lighting and use of flash photography;

• Asking for people to repeat statements for the purpose of recording.

9. Impact on meeting attendees - It is important that members of the public, who are seated in

the separate public area, are not photographed/filmed/recorded without their consent.

However, if a member of the public asks a question, presents a petition or makes a

representation, then they are likely to be filmed and are deemed to have given their consent

in these circumstances.

All meeting Agendas, which are published on the Council’s website in advance of a public

meeting, will include a paragraph on the possibility of a meeting being recorded and the

Chair will make an announcement to this effect at the opening of the meeting.

10. Consideration of members of the public gallery - If members of the public object to be

filmed, they should seat themselves to the rear of the Designated Filming Area. We would ask

that the person recording and those objecting reach a mutually suitable arrangement and that

the proceedings are not disrupted.

