



TAKELEY PARISH COUNCIL

Station House, Sycamore Close, Takeley, Essex, CM22 6QA

www.takeleypc.co.uk

E-mail: takeleyparishcouncil@outlook.com

Clerk – Julia Peachey – Tel: 01279 902434

Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy

The Council has its own official website: <http://www.takeleypc.co.uk>

The Parish Council official email is noted as takeleyparishcouncil@outlook.com

The email account is monitored mainly during office hours, Monday to Thursday, and we aim to reply to all questions sent, as soon as we can, subject to workload and policy.

Sending a message/post via social media will not be considered as contacting the Council for official purposes and Takeley Parish Council will not be obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through these channels. Instead, please make direct contact with the Council's Clerk and/or members of the council by emailing.

The Clerk is responsible for dealing with email received and passing on any relevant mail to members or external agencies for information and/or action. All communications on behalf of the Council will usually come from the Clerk, and/or otherwise will always be copied to the Clerk. When you contact us you will be conveying your written consent for us to use your personal details in a manner to facilitate your enquiry.

Individual Councillors are at liberty to communicate directly with parishioners in relation to their own personal views, if appropriate, copy to the Clerk. NB any emails copied to the Clerk become official and will be subject to The Freedom of Information Act. These procedures will ensure that a complete and proper record of all correspondence is kept.

Takeley Parish Council do not unnecessarily forward personal information on to other people or groups outside of the Council, this includes names, addresses, e-mail, IP addresses and cookie identifiers.

The Council may choose to direct members of the public to Takeley Parish Council's official website where information may be sourced. Response or action to Social Media will be at the Council's discretion based on the situation for example, the Clerk may be asked to post generic information, if considered applicable which may promote a current council activity. Generally, however instructions will have been pre-approved by the council and posted by admin, so as not to divert staff resources. Takeley Parish Council reserve the right to contact the Administrator to remove an inappropriate public posting with an *"initial warning that the comment has breached the Council's Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy."*

Any public communication, that is observed under the following criteria may activate the Council to take formal legal action under it's insurance.

- Obscene or racist content
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Potentially libellous statements.
- Plagiarised material; any material in violation of any laws, including copyright
- Private, personal information published without consent.
- Allegations of breach of a Council's policy or the law

If the post alleges a breach of a Council's policy or the law the person who posted it will be asked to submit a formal complaint to the Council or report the matter to the Police as soon as possible to allow due process.

Parish/Town Council Website.

Where necessary, Takeley Parish Council may direct those contacting us to our website to see the required information, or we may forward their question to one of our Councillors for consideration and response. The Council is not obliged to respond to every comment we receive; particularly if we are experiencing a heavy workload or an answer has already been given. Vexatious or repetitive comments will also not necessitate a response.

However, where multiple e-mails are received – a public statement or further information on the topic may occasionally be issued on our website as a general response to all, if the council should consider applicable.

SMS (texting)

Members and the Clerk may use SMS as a convenient way to communicate at times. All are reminded that this policy also applies to such messages.

Video Conferencing e.g. Skype

If this medium is used to communicate please note that this policy also applies to the use of video conferencing.

Councillors are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct and the Data Protection Act in all their work on behalf of the Council.

As more and more information becomes available at the press of a button, it is vital that all information is treated sensitively and securely. Councillors are expected to maintain an awareness of the confidentiality of information that they have access to and not to share confidential information with anyone. Failure to properly observe confidentiality may be seen as a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct and will be dealt with through its prescribed procedures (at the extreme it may also involve a criminal investigation). Members should also be careful only to cc essential recipients on emails i.e. to avoid use of the 'Reply to All' option if at all possible, but of course copying in all who need to know and ensuring that email trails have been removed.

Takeley Parish Council reserves the right to adjust this policy subject to changes in technology and any such matter which may affect Employment or Data Protection legislation.

