

Upton Parish Council

Controlled Communications Protocol

It is the wish of the Council to maintain flexibility and reasonable informality in written (e.g. email and letter) communications between councillors and between councillors and staff. However, this is a privilege not a right and all councillors must accept that their communications should at all times be respectful, reasonable, courteous and professional. The Council will not tolerate bullying, harassment, or aggressive behaviour, whether verbal or written.

In circumstances where the full council by resolution considers that a councillor has overstepped the mark the following protocol shall apply:

- 1) The councillor shall direct all written communication relating to the business of the council to the clerk to the council copying in the mayor/chairman.
- 2) Acknowledgement of receipt of correspondence will be sent to the councillor within 3 working days.
- 3) A response, where one is required, shall be sent by the clerk to the council to the councillor within 20 working days.
- 4) If the clerk to the council, in consultation with the mayor/chairman, considers that any correspondence received is repeated or vexatious then only an acknowledgement of receipt will be sent, stating that the correspondence is considered repeated or vexatious.
- 5) All correspondence between the councillor and the council shall be kept in a dossier and be made available to any councillor wishing to inspect it. It should be noted that such correspondence may be disclosable under the Freedom of Information Act.
- 6) The protocol shall remain in operation for six months from the date of the full council meeting at which it was invoked. On the expiry of the six months the councillor is free to resume normal communications with councillors and staff. If the council has cause to invoke the protocol a second time within a further six months then it shall remain in place until the council decides otherwise.
- 7) A breach of this protocol shall result in a complaint being made to the relevant Standards Committee and a report shall be given to council whereupon further control measures may be introduced.
- 8) Nothing in this protocol shall fetter the ability of a councillor to carry out their reasonable duties as an elected member of the authority.

Adopted: _____

Signed: _____

Review on: _____