

Why do we need a Communication Working Group

It is important for the electors of Oswestry Rural Parish to know what their council is doing, and why, and should be able to contact their councillors easily. This becomes an increasingly complex task in the everchanging Information Landscape in which we live.

Until recently the Parish Council's communication with electors was limited to:

- Notices on the 12 Parish Noticeboards
- The, difficult to navigate, Parish Council website
- A Parish Council Facebook Group to which nothing had been posted since May 2016

If you needed to know what the Parish Council was doing, you had to gather round the Parish Pump! It's no wonder that this year's contested election in the *Morda with Sweeney Ward* was the first for around 130 years.



Parish Council Noticeboard in Aston (with water pump)

Changes are beginning to be made, with a new website under construction and a new Facebook Page receiving frequent updates. However, electors now receive information from multiple sources, so the Parish Council needs to utilise a number of different Communication Channels to reach as wide an audience as possible. These include:

- Parish Council Website
- Parish Council Noticeboards
- Printed Newsletters
- Email Newsletters
- Social Media Channels
 - Facebook Page
 - Instagram account
 - YouTube Channel

Communication also needs to be two way, so channels need to be put in place through which electors can raise issues with, or comment on the work of, the Parish Council.

It is important to foster links with local media outlets so that ORPC becomes a “go to” source for comment on issues affecting the Parish.

There is a lot of work to be done to establish this new way of working, which is why a Communication Working Group is needed. Below is a draft Terms of Reference for the group.

Communication Working Group

Terms of Reference

Preamble

It is important for the Parish Council to be able to communicate effectively with its electors, and for those electors to contact the Council. Therefore, the purpose of this Working Group is to define, maintain and monitor the strategies which enable effective communication between the Council and its Electors.

Duty

In pursuance of the Local Government Act 1972, Section 101 a public authority has a duty to: represent the local community, deliver services to meet local needs, and improve quality of life and community well being. It is therefore important that the public authority communicates what is being done on behalf of the local community, and makes it possible for the local community to make known its own views on the work of the public authority.

This Working Group will therefore assist in ensuring that the Parish Council establishes and utilises effective lines of communication with its local community.

Membership	One councillor from each Ward. A total of 5 councillors in all.
Objective	To define, maintain and monitor the strategies established to enable effective communication between the Council and its Electors.
Function	To create and maintain the strategies for each of the Parish Council's Communication Channels. To monitor the effectiveness of each of the Parish Council's Communication Channels and provide an update, written or verbal, to each Parish Council meeting. Establish channels through which electors can raise issues with, or comment on, the work of the Parish Council. Encourage councillors from each Ward to provide regular updates on activities in their ward. Foster links with local media outlets so that the Parish Council becomes a "go to" source for comment on issues affecting the Parish.
Authority	Local Government Act 1972, Section 101
Appointment	The working group shall be appointed at the Annual Meeting of the parish council. The working group can be dissolved by the Parish Council at any time.
Delegation	No delegated authority other than the functions laid out in these Terms of Reference.
Meetings	The working group will meet as often as needed but not less than twice in each council year.

	RESPONSIBILITIES
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