

CARLTON LE MOORLAND PARISH COUNCIL

STANDING ORDER ON CORRESPONDENCE

1. The Clerk should open all correspondence.
2. In the absence of the Clerk, the Chairman or in their absence, the Vice Chairman should undertake this duty.
3. All letters received from members of the public should be acknowledged within 5 days.
4. Letters sent to individual councillors in their official capacity should be treated as having been sent to the Council and handed to the clerk for acknowledgement and action in the normal way.
5. All correspondence should remain confidential until dealt with at a Council meeting and may not be read by members of the public.
6. Letters received up to 7 working days prior to a Council meeting should be circulated to all members.
7. All mail should be presented at the meeting under the heading 'Correspondence' and a brief summary only given by the Clerk. The summary should not reveal any personal names, including that of the author or any company name but merely state brief facts (e.g. a letter has been received from a resident complaining of/pointing out/supporting/objecting to...).
8. In urgent exceptional circumstances (e.g. an important deadline or where sensitive issues are involved) correspondence may be dealt with between meetings and should be brought to the notice of all councillors as quickly as possible. On these occasions, either the Clerk or a nominated councillor with special interest in the subject should prepare a draft response which should be circulated to all members and agreed by a quorum of councillors.
9. Complex or specialised correspondence may be delegated to a councillor with special interest in the subject to prepare a response on behalf of the Council. However, the delegation and a 'steer' on content must be agreed at a Council meeting and the final draft be agreed by a quorum of councillors.
10. A full response within 7 working days to any correspondence previously circulated should be agreed at the Council meeting. In the case of complex or sensitive issues, the Clerk or a delegated councillor may prepare a draft on the lines agreed at the meeting but unless agreed otherwise at the meeting should circulate the draft to all members for comment before posting. The final reply should be agreed by a quorum of councillors. In the event that more clarification is needed, an adequate explanation of why the issue was not resolved would be required.
11. Letters received later than 7 working days prior to a Council meeting should be copied and circulated to members with the agenda unless it is not practicable to do so. The Chairman will read out a brief summary of the contents unless agreed by a majority at the next Council meeting that an urgent reply is necessary, be considered at the next meeting.
12. Replies should be sent within 7 working days of the Council meeting.
13. All replies should be sent under the name of the Clerk.

14. Planning applications should be circulated to members, whose individual comments and observations should be incorporated into the Council's reply, which should be prepared by the Clerk, within the District Council's timetable.
15. Correspondence on circulation should be sent in a folder with a circulation slip for signature by each councillor.
16. In the event of correspondence being received by the Council, which it considered to be frivolous, vexatious or malicious, it may decide to forward the correspondence to the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils for advice and to reply on the Councils behalf. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be delegated to make the decision to refer correspondence to the Association if it is necessary to do so in order to meet the Policy's timescale for replying to correspondence.