



Communications Strategy 2026–2029

Version	Date of Adoption	Minute Reference	Review Date	Originator
2026	23.3.2026	2026-101	March 2027	G White

Communications Strategy 2026 - 2029

1. Introduction

Communication is central to the effective operation of Worplesdon Parish Council (“the Council”). As the tier of local government closest to residents, the Council must ensure that information is shared clearly, accurately and in a timely manner, and that residents are able to engage meaningfully with local decision-making.

This Strategy sets out why the Council communicates, who it communicates with, how communication will take place, standards the Council will apply, and how success will be measured.

The Strategy supports the Council’s obligations regarding transparency, accountability and public participation, and complements statutory publication requirements.

The Council recognises that communication is an important two-way process. The purpose is not only to inform residents but also to listen to them and understand community priorities.

2. Vision and Objectives

Vision

Residents of Worplesdon Parish understand what the Parish Council does, how it makes decisions, and how they can influence those decisions.

The Council aims to be recognised as open, accessible, responsive and community-focused.

Key Objectives

- Provide clear, accurate and accessible information.
- Improve resident awareness of the Council’s role and powers.
- Encourage engagement in consultations and community initiatives.
- Promote local facilities, services and events.
- Ensure legal and financial transparency.
- Strengthen relationships with partner organisations.

3. Communication Principles

- Lawful – compliant with relevant legislation and guidance.
- Accurate – factually correct at the time of publication.
- Neutral and non-political.
- Accessible – clear and written in plain English.
- Proportionate – cost-effective and appropriate for a publicly funded body.
- Respectful – courteous and professional at all times.
- Timely – shared early enough to allow participation in decision-making.

4. Stakeholders

Internal

- Parish Councillors
- Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
- Parish Council staff
- Volunteers and working groups

External

- Residents of Worplesdon Parish
- Community groups and associations
- Local businesses
- Surrey County Council
- Guildford Borough Council
- Police and emergency services
- Schools, churches and charities
- MPs and elected representatives
- Local media (and, on occasion, national media)

5. What We Communicate

- Meeting agendas and minutes
- Council decisions
- Financial information and budgets
- Planning consultations and responses
- Community consultations and surveys
- Local projects and initiatives
- Events and community activities
- Services and facilities
- Contact information
- How residents can raise issues or complaints
- The Council will also explain responsibilities and which services are provided by other authorities.

6. How We Communicate

- Website – primary source of official information
- Email – direct enquiries and responses
- Social media – supplementary updates and engagement
- Notice boards – statutory and urgent notices
- Printed communications – newsletters and leaflets
- Meetings and engagement – public participation and surveys

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Official communications issued on behalf of the Council shall only be made by authorised officers: the Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer, the Assistant Clerk, and the Communications & Engagement Officer.

Officers and Councillors must not present personal opinions as Council policy, commit the Council to a course of action, or issue press statements on behalf of the Council.

The Officer may research and trial new communication methods or tools where these may improve accessibility or engagement. Any ongoing cost or contractual commitment must be approved in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.

Role of the Communications & Engagement Officer

- Maintain and update the Council website
- Manage social media accounts and create/curate content
- Promote meetings, consultations and initiatives
- Prepare newsletters and notices
- Improve public understanding of the Council's role
- Use professional judgement and initiative to raise awareness and engagement

8. Media Relations

Only authorised officers may issue press statements on behalf of the Council. Responses will be factual and reflect Council decisions.

Supporting Councillors

The Communications & Engagement Officer may provide factual briefing information to councillors and officers to assist them in understanding Council decisions and ongoing projects.

Councillors speaking to the media do so in their individual capacity unless formally authorised by the Council.

9. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Content Creation Tools

The Council recognises that modern communication tools, including artificial intelligence (AI) assisted writing, image creation and design software, may assist in producing accessible and timely communications.

All published communications remain the responsibility of Worplesdon Parish Council.

Content must be reviewed and verified by an authorised officer before publication.

AI-generated content must not be relied upon for legal, financial, planning, or policy statements without officer verification.

Confidential, personal, or sensitive Council information must not be entered into external AI systems.

Communications must accurately reflect decisions formally made by the Council.

AI tools must not be used to:

- Fabricate meeting outcomes
- Create fictional quotations
- Generate responses to complaints without officer review
- Produce material that could mislead residents about Council decisions or statutory processes

10. Accessibility

- Plain English will be used
- Alternative formats will be considered where reasonable
- Noticeboards and printed material will remain available
- Paper consultation options will be provided where appropriate

11. Monitoring and Measuring Effectiveness

- Website analytics and page views
- Social media engagement and reach
- Attendance at meetings and events
- Consultation response rates
- Resident enquiries and response times
- Complaints relating to communication

The Communications & Engagement Officer will provide recommendations for improvement based on monitoring data and community feedback, which will be considered by the Council.

The Council will periodically review its communication channels to ensure they remain appropriate for different sections of the community, including residents who do not use digital services.

This Strategy will be reviewed periodically. Proposed amendments may be prepared by officers but must be approved by the Council.

12. Public Consultations and Hosted Events

The Council recognises that direct engagement with residents is essential. The Communications & Engagement Officer will support and organise public consultations, exhibitions, drop-in sessions and community events as appropriate to increase awareness of the Council's activities.

Consultations and events will provide opportunities for residents to ask questions, provide feedback and influence Council decisions. Feedback gathered will be recorded and considered by the Council as part of its decision-making process.

13. Approval

This Communications Strategy was adopted by Worplesdon Parish Council on: 23 March 2026.

Next review due: March 2027