



# **HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR TOWN COUNCIL**

**Adopted 17 July 2018**

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## Introduction

CTC is committed to ensuring that decision-making is transparent and accountable. It will enable the local community to influence decisions that impact on their lives and on the wellbeing of the local community as a whole through clear communication channels.

Efficient, clear communication between the community and Camelford Town Council (CTC) is really important to us. This document sets out policy, procedure and standards that CTC have in place in order to communicate with our community. Better service and communication between town councils and their communities is based on two central themes; transparent decision-making and customer service.

This document includes basic service goals such as; turnaround times for correspondence, returning telephone calls, as well as notification and complaint handling.

## Meetings

Our meetings are run in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12, which set out how we should notify you of our full Council Meetings and Annual Meeting of the Council, and also includes provision on public participation. Based on these principles, we are committed to ensuring that there is:

- Community access to two council meetings each month (excluding August and January where there is only one meeting) - 15 minutes participation at the start of each council meeting.
- Public access to council records (see Freedom of Information Policy in Appendix 3)
- Agendas published on the Town Council website, social media and local noticeboards 3 clear working days ahead of any meeting.
- Approved minutes of the previous meeting on the Town Council website, social media and the main local noticeboard.
- Provision for conducting community surveys
- Provision for public meetings on topical local issues
- Provision of service and information to the local community through the Town Hall offices, by telephone, email, Facebook message, website contact form and letter.
- Provision to assist members of the local community who wish to contact councillors

## How to contact Camelford Town Council

You are able to contact The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk at Camelford Town Council via a number of options:

### **By person at:**

the Town Hall, Market Place, Camelford PL32 9PD

Monday & Tuesday	10.00am – 4.30pm
Wednesday & Thursday	10.00am – 1.00pm
Friday	9am to 1pm (by appointment only)
Saturday	10.00am – 1.00pm (only library staff who will be able to take messages)

**Telephone: 01840 212880**

**Email:** [clerk@camelford-tc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@camelford-tc.gov.uk) or [admin@camelford-tc.gov.uk](mailto:admin@camelford-tc.gov.uk)

**Website contact form:** <http://www.camelford-tc.gov.uk/general-enquiries/>

**Facebook page/private message -** <https://www.facebook.com/camelfordtc/>

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/CamelfordTC>

You are able to contact Councillors directly, and their details are listed on the website:

<http://www.camelford-tc.gov.uk/your-councillors/>

Messages can be left with CTC staff who will pass on the message, either by calling the Councillor or emailing the Councillor (whichever is deemed more appropriate).

## Information about you

We receive phone calls and emails from the general public, whether it is to get in touch with a Councillor, rent an allotment, enquire about an event. When we receive communication from you, we will keep your details in order to process your enquiry. When we are satisfied that your enquiry has been dealt with appropriately, we will destroy your details either by confidential waste or deletion from our electronic database.

We will inform you, at the time of enquiry, who we will pass your information to, and for which purposes. For example, if you want something raised at a Council meeting, we will forward your enquiry to all Councillors. For more details see heading "Want to put an item on the agenda?" A copy of all correspondence is available to the general public who attend meetings. Our Privacy Notice and Data Protection and Information Policy which can be found on the website.

## Where to find information about CTC

### Noticeboards

We have 4 CTC noticeboards in the Parish:

- By the crossing on the A39 by the Masons Arms Public House (agendas, minutes, audit information, other information regarding events and allotments).
- Outside the Town Hall (limited to agendas, minutes and a calendar of meetings)
- Tregoodwell (limited to agendas)
- Helstone (outside the Village Hall) (limited to agendas)

We also have a noticeboard within the Library, where we will put up information about any planning applications and events.

### The Local Press

We work closely with the Camelford & Delabole Post, who post news articles. They are invited to each Town Council meeting and will often produce an article following that meeting on any significant news.

### Website

The website is updated regularly and includes, amongst other things, the following information:

- Agendas (which includes details of income and expenditure)
- Minutes

- Annual Calendar of Meetings
- Councillor contact details
- Policy and Procedure (including monthly and annual Transparency Code information)
- Planning Log (listing all planning applications)
- Events (including library events)
- Surveys/consultations
- Neighbourhood Development Plan information

## Social Media

### Facebook

We publish the following information on Facebook:

- Agendas
- Minutes
- Events
- Road closure information (from Cornwall Council)
- Surveys/consultations
- Neighbourhood Development Plan information
- Allotment information
- General CTC news

### Twitter

We publish the following information on Twitter:

- Agendas
- Minutes
- Neighbourhood Development plan information
- Events
- General CTC news

## Procedures

### Procedures for Communicating with the Council

#### Telephone calls

Telephone contact between council staff and members of the public gives CTC an opportunity to respond quickly and effectively to enquiries, comments and complaints from members of the public.

Where possible, we try to ensure that:

- All telephone calls are answered either in person or by an automated telephone answering system.
- All staff are responsible for answering the telephone (including library staff).
- All staff will respond to the call and promptly transfer the caller onto the member of staff who can best respond or; if the call cannot be responded to, take a message including brief details of the caller's name, contact details and the nature of the enquiry. We will pass this information onto the person we feel can answer your question.
- Staff aim to deal with enquiries as soon as possible, usually responding the same day. If it is not possible to deal with the enquiry the same day (due to staff absence/training etc), the caller will be informed of an estimated time when the enquiry can be dealt with and who will be calling back.

- Any complaints will be logged in our Feedback computerised file. We do not hold caller information, but just the nature of the call. We review this every 2 months to see whether there is an issue that needs escalating at Council.

### Website Communication

CTC staff are notified via email when an enquiry comes through the website contact form. CTC staff aim to reply the same day and will inform you if your enquiry needs to be passed to someone else in order to be dealt with, and if this is the case, give an estimated time when you can expect a reply and by whom.

### Social media

CTC have their own Facebook page and only comments and private messages through that specific page will be answered. CTC do post events on other sites (What's on in Camelford & Surrounding Area, Events Cornwall & Devon), but will only respond to questions from the CTC Facebook page.

Any private FB messages will be responded to by CTC staff. CTC staff aim to reply the same day and will inform you if your enquiry needs to be passed to someone else in order to be dealt with, and if this is the case, give an estimated time when you can expect a reply and by whom.

### Do you want an item put on the agenda?

If you would like an issue to be discussed at a Council meeting, this needs to go on the agenda and must be received, in writing, by the Clerk at least 3 working days before the next meeting. If the correspondence is received later than that, it will be put on the following agenda. The Clerk will inform you of the date of the meeting your correspondence will be discussed. Email correspondence, Facebook message, Twitter message will also be accepted forms of correspondence.

Correspondence is distributed to all Councillors and is available for the public to view at the Council meeting (apart from Part 2 paperwork which is confidential).

It is important that you are also aware that members of the public are entitled to record meetings (e.g filming, audio recording). For further information, see Appendix 1 - Policy for Broadcasting or using Social Media at Council Meetings.”

### Do you want to speak at a meeting?

At the start of each meeting, we allow members of the public to speak on any issue for a 3-minute period during the 15-minute public participation agenda item. You must inform the Clerk at least 3 clear working days before the meeting that you would like to speak. A brief summary of what you would like to speak about would be helpful. You can request this by any of the communication methods listed above.

### How to Complain to your Council

Camelford Town Council recognises that from time to time there will be concerns expressed by members of the public over the activities of the Council, one of its members or employees. To address these issues the Council has adopted a procedure for the handling of complaints. This procedure allows people to have a form of address to the Council if they feel they have a complaint, or have been unfairly treated in their dealings with the Council staff, Councillors, the Council or its Committees.

If a member of the public feels that his/her complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily he /she may submit a complaint against a member/members of the Council to the Monitoring Officer at Cornwall Council:

The Monitoring Officer, Cornwall Council, Treyew Road, Truro, TR1 3AY.

## Verbal Complaints

1. On receipt of a complaint by telephone or in person the Clerk will try to satisfy the complainant immediately or as soon as is practicable.
2. Any anonymous complaint will not be dealt with.
3. If the Clerk is unable to answer the complaint immediately, then full details of the complaint together with the complainant's telephone number, name and contact details will be recorded so that a further verbal response can be made as soon as possible.
4. If a verbal response is unable to satisfy, then the Clerk/member will ask that the complaint be put in writing in order that it can be investigated more fully.

## Written Complaints

1. On receiving a written complaint, the Clerk shall try to settle the complaint directly.
2. If the complaint is about the behaviour of a member or employee of the Council or a Contractor used by the Parish Council, the Clerk must also notify the person and offer the opportunity for comment on the manner in which it is intended to try and settle the complaint.
3. If necessary, the Clerk will send a holding letter to the complainant to allow further time to address the issues raised.
4. The Clerk or Chairman shall bring any written complaint which has not been settled to the next meeting of the Council and the Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date of the meeting. The Complainant will be offered the opportunity to explain the nature of the complaint to the meeting.
5. The Clerk shall consult with the Chairman/Vice Chairman to consider whether the written complaint warrants discussion at a Council meeting in the absence of the press and public, with the decision on the complaint being announced at the Council meeting in public.
6. The Clerk will communicate in writing the decision that has been made by the Council and the nature of any action taken by the Council.

## Complaints Against Council Members or Officers

1. Any complaint against a member or officer must be submitted in writing.
2. If the complaint is against the actions of the Clerk, it should be submitted in writing to the Chairman.
3. If the complaint is made against the actions of a member or employee, the Clerk will present the complaint to the Council for consideration at a meeting held in the absence of the press or public.
4. If the complaint is made against the actions of the Clerk, the Chairman will present the complaint to the Council for consideration at a meeting held in the absence of the press or public.
5. The Complainant may be invited to attend part of the meeting to explain the nature of their complaint, in the absence of the public and press.
6. Persons mentioned in the complaint will have the opportunity to explain the nature of their actions to the meeting, in the absence of the public and press.
7. The result of any Council consideration of a complaint will be announced at a Council meeting in public.

## Inappropriate Behaviour

We understand that sometimes the general public may not be happy with a decision made by the Council. However, our staff and Councillors have the right to carry out their work without threat or abuse, and it will ensure that behaviour must stay within certain acceptable limits. The council is entitled to consider placing and enforcing limits on contacts between CTC and the person displaying the inappropriate behaviour.

## Appendices

1. Policy for dealing with abusive, persistent or vexatious complaints and complainants.
2. Broadcast Policy
3. Freedom of Information
4. Data Protection and Information Policy
5. Privacy Notice