

## Misterton Parish Council

### Protocol for Communications and Delegation of Powers



As a Quality Council, the Parish Council recognises the need for speedy communications and effective use of ICT. It also recognises the need for a protocol to guide it in the ever-changing world of technology and communications, which inevitably has implications for decision-making. Email is now a common form of communication throughout local government, and in using it the Parish Council needs to ensure that safeguards are met. The protocol set out below is designed to provide the necessary guidance, whilst ensuring that the Parish Council adheres to its statutory obligations at all times.

1. The Parish Council will, subject to the willingness of any volunteer member to produce hard copies and deliver them, make available copies of all member group Emails sent out by the Clerk to any member not having access to Email.
2. A member performing the service at 1. above shall be entitled to reimbursement of the cost of computer consumables and paper.
3. The Parish Council will also, as an alternative, make available copy Emails for collection at The Misterton Centre.
4. Subject to the willingness of any member to assist in establishing a hotmail account, a member without access to Email at home may, if he or she wishes, be provided with a hotmail address, accessible on other computers, including those at the Library.
5. Where it appears to the Clerk that a member is not in receipt of Emails by any of the above means, he will post copies of only those Emails which he considers will inform that member in the decision-making process.
6. Where a member shares an Email address, the Clerk to the Council will exclude that member from the Email group if he considers a matter to be confidential.
7. Where 4. above applies, the Clerk to the Council will post to any such member a copy of any Email if he considers it will inform that member in the decision-making process.
8. Any member replying to a group Email message sent out by the Clerk to the Council or any member shall, if responding, reply to the whole group.
9. In order to facilitate the efficient conduct of business, the Clerk to the Council shall be given a delegated power to take any action which cannot realistically wait until the next appropriate meeting, provided that such action shall not relate to the formulation of policy or exceed powers given to the Clerk under the Parish Council's Financial Regulations.

10. The power at 7. above shall not in any way impinge on or restrict the separate power given to the Clerk to the Council by Financial Regulation 3(4).
11. Before exercising the power at 7. above, the Clerk to the Council shall consult the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council, or, if either or both are unavailable, any other two members.
12. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council shall continue to enjoy a delegated power to jointly exercise any functions of the Council where urgency dictates, subject to compliance with statutory requirements.
13. The powers enjoyed by the Finance Committee and General Purposes Committee to authorise payment of accounts and make observations on planning applications shall continue.
14. The powers enjoyed by the Combined Charities Committee to co-ordinate decision-making on charitable donations shall continue.
15. This protocol shall be reviewed at every annual meeting of the Finance Committee.

12<sup>th</sup> February, 2008