Funtington Parish Council Email Protocol

Funtington Parish Council, in line with other professional organisations, has adopted an Email Policy.   It is based on industry best standards and should be followed by all Funtington Parish Council members.

Email is not always the best way to communicate information as email messages can often be misunderstood. There is no guarantee that an email will be read as soon as it is sent. If the email requires immediate action then it is probably not the best way to communicate.

Email is not a secure method of transmission – it should not be assumed that any email communication is secure or private. Every electronic message leaves a trail. It is advisable not to write anything that could be ruinous to you or hurtful to others.

When is email a good way to get a message across?

Email is a good way to get a message across when:

- You need to get in touch with a person who is hard to reach via telephone;
- The information you want to share is not time sensitive;
- You need to send someone an electronic file i.e. a document for discussion;
- You need to distribute information to a large number of people quickly; or
- A written record of a communication is needed.

When is an email not a good form of communication?

- Your message is long and complicated and requires additional discussion that would be best accomplished face-to-face;
- Your message is emotionally charged or the tone of your message could easily be misconstrued. If you would hesitate to say something face-to-face do not write it in an email; or
- The information is confidential. Email is never confidential. Keep in mind your message could be forwarded to other people without your knowledge.

Writing emails

When writing an email, it is important to compose the message with the same care and clarity you would apply to drafting a letter, as emails form part of the corporate record under the General Data Protection Guidance Regulations and Freedom of Information Act.

- Always complete the subject line with a clear description of what the email is about;
- Always, always read email before sending and consider the resultant reaction;
- Never write your email using capital letters, either within the email or in the address line. This implies shouting;
- Don't conduct an argument on email – it is unprofessional;
- Never reply in anger. Take a break or sleep on it before responding;
- Never 'flame' anyone. A flame is an electronic verbal attack. If a flame is received, then please do not respond in anger as this may be regretted later. Users should not engage in exchanging flames and create a 'flamewar';
- Be polite. Terseness can be misinterpreted. Please and thank you go a long way;

- Add a salutation e.g. Dear / Hi; missing one out can appear impolite;
- Proof read every message. Mistakes do not go unnoticed by the recipients. Don't rely on spellcheckers. Read and re-read your email a few times, preferably aloud, before sending it off;
- Add the email address last. Even when you are replying to a message it's a good precaution to delete the recipient's address and insert it only when you are sure the message is ready to be sent. This prevents inadvertently pressing the 'send button' before the email is really ready - I'm sure we've all done it in the past!; and
- Remember emails sent externally represent and reflect upon the council.