

CRISIS MANAGEMENT POLICY

To be reviewed annually

1. INTRODUCTION

In order to maintain trust, transparency and effective communication with residents, stakeholders and the media, our Parish Council has created this policy. The Crisis Management Policy outlines procedures to follow during a crisis situation in order to ensure accurate, timely and co-ordinated information dissemination.

2. OBJECTIVES

- Provide clear, accurate and consistent information
- Protect the reputation of the Parish Council at all times
- Maintain public confidence
- Minimize misinformation and avoid confusion

3. DEFINITION OF A CRISIS

A crisis is any event or situation that poses a serious threat to the community or to the council's operations, reputation or stakeholder trust. Examples can include:

- A natural disaster (eg flooding, landslides etc)
- Public health emergency
- Controversies involving the council
- Major incidents affecting the community or locality

4. CRISIS COMMUNICATION TEAM

The Parish Council will establish a Crisis Communication Team (CCT) comprising:

- Parish Clerk
Plans and co-ordinates internal and external communication efforts and, in conjunction with the Chairman, acts as a spokesperson for the authority
- Councillors
Provide support and specialized input based on the crisis. Councillors assigned to this team will depend on the nature of the crisis. Disseminate official information as widely as possible.
- External Advisers (if required)
The Council will engage with legal advisers and / or emergency services, when appropriate.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- Parish Clerk
Prepares press and communication statements, manages and monitors communication channels, monitors media coverage, disseminates, updates and corrects any misinformation.
- Councillors
Provide essential local knowledge and assist in community engagement

6. COMMUNICATIONNN PROCEDURES

- Initial Assessment
Identify scope, stakeholders and potential impact of the crisis

- Notification
Whoever is the first to be aware must alert the Clerk to enact this policy, if they are not already aware. The Clerk will notify the relevant authorities, insurance company etc. as necessary
- Stakeholder Analysis
Identify primary audiences (eg residents, businesses and media)
Message development
Create accurate, concise messages with these principles
 - o Acknowledge the situation
 - o State actions being taken
 - o Provide clear instructions or reassurance.

7. COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

- Website
- Social Media
- Email
- Press Releases
- Community Meetings – called by the Clerk for large-scale crisis

8. APPROVAL PROCESS

Unless the Clerk requests assistance, they are responsible for ensuring any communications are accurate and meet the terms of this policy. Obtaining feedback from Councillors will be encouraged but may not be possible due to timings.

9. MONITORING AND FEEDBACK

- Track media coverage, public sentiment and social media discussions
- Address misinformation promptly
- Collect feedback to improve response strategies

10. POST-CRISIS EVALUATION

After any crisis situation, the CCT will:

- Conduct a review
- Document lessons learned
- Update policies and procedures as necessary

CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN

1. Preparedness

Regularly update contact lists of stakeholders and media outlets
Ensure this policy is regularly reviewed and ensure it includes all relevant information and guidance.

2. Response

Activate the CCT

Initial Statement – issue update, acknowledge the situation and provide a timeframe for updates

Ongoing Updates – share at regular intervals, include multi-media formats to enhance the message

Community Engagement – organize briefings or Q & A sessions, if needed

3. Recovery

Continued Updates – communicate restoration or 'normal' and thank stakeholders for cooperation

Public Relations – highlight council's commitment and community resilience

Evaluation – analyse feedback and assess the effectiveness of the policy & plan and report findings to stakeholders, be prepared to incorporate changes based on findings.