

# Communication and Social Media Policy

Responsibility: Full Council

**Review Cycle:** Annually

Date of Adoption / Renewal	Resolution Number	Date of Next Review
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#### Introduction

With the electorate - this policy applies to all Parish Councillors and all Herstmonceux Parish Council Meetings - Planning, Finance & General Purposes, Personnel-Sub Committee, Amenities and Full Council. Herstmonceux Parish Council supports the principles of openness and transparency. It encourages public interest and engagement in decision making.

Within the council - members and officers are encouraged to develop good working relationships whilst remaining mindful of the "employer" and "employee" relationship. Professional standards should be maintained at all times.

No single councillor may instruct the council staff, unless specifically authorised to do so, such as through a specific delegated authority from the council. Members wishing to have urgent action taken or to report a problem requiring early attention should contact the clerk, discussing the matter in full so that preliminary consideration can be given to the legal, financial, technical and staffing implications and to the possible impact and relationship to existing projects or policies in which the Council is currently involved. The Clerk may then re-schedule the priorities of any employee, if necessary.

# **Parish Council Correspondence**

- The point of contact for all communication to the council, is the parish clerk.
- All communications appertaining to council matters should be addressed to The Parish Clerk.
- The clerk should deal with all correspondence and will ensure that information or direct enquiry is passed to councillors as appropriate.
- The majority of council correspondence takes place by email. Office staff and councillors are allocated an official office 365 email address and access to the council outlook shared drive. The council email account should be used at all times when communicating about council work / decisions / discussions.
- Councillors are advised, as good practice, to set up a standard councillor email signature as follows:

Kind Regards, Cllr FirstName Surname Herstmonceux Parish Council Parish Office, 1 The Old Forge, Gardner Street Herstmonceux, BN27 4LG

- Councillors are allocated a password by the council's ICT provider and should inform the clerk if they change their 365 account password. Councilor email accounts should be available for scrutiny by the officers / HPC's ICT provider at any given time for reasons of business security, data protection and Freedom of Information requests.
- Councillors and officers do not have a right to obtain confidential information/documentation unless they can demonstrate a 'need to know'.
- Requests for information from councillors must be in accordance with current law, common rules and regulations.
- All official correspondence should be sent by the clerk in the name of the council using council letter headed paper or from the clerk's email account, or other official officer account, as appropriate.
- The clerk will acknowledge the correspondent as soon as is practicable, with the exception of communication from correspondents as below:

The Information Commissioner's guidance on valid requests, under S8 of the Freedom of Information Act, identifies that a correct name and address must be submitted for a request to be valid. In accordance with this Act, the Parish Council instruct the Parish Clerk not to respond to communication of an anonymous nature.

- No individual councillor or officer should be the sole custodian of any correspondence or information in the name of the parish council, a committee, sub-committee or working party.
- Any communication appertaining to decision making should be in writing whenever possible, to allow for an audit trail.
- All communications sent to an individual councillor must be forwarded to the clerk as soon as possible.
- The parish clerk will deal with all correspondence and bring any necessary information to all members via email. At the clerk's discretion, or by councilor request or motion, some items may be referred to a council agenda.
- Any correspondence needing a formal decision will be taken to the appropriate council meeting for noting and agreeing of a response or necessary further action to be taken.
- Any items which need urgent attention will be brought to the attention of the Councillors.
- Any communications sent by a councillor, as a result of an agreed action at a council meeting, or between the clerk and the councillor, should copy in the clerk.

- All forwarded copies of correspondence will adhere to the requirements of the General Data Protection regulations.

# Complaints

- If Councillors receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be immediately referred to the clerk who will deal with the complaint in accordance with the Council's adopted complaints policy.

# Agenda Items for Council, Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Parties

- Agendas should be clear and concise. They should contain sufficient information
  to enable Councillors to make an informed decision, and for Councillors and the
  public to understand what matters are being considered and what decisions are
  to be taken at a meeting.
- Agenda items 'for information' should be kept to a minimum.
- Where the clerk or a councillor wishes fellow councillors to receive matters for "information only", this information should be circulated via the clerk.

# Communications clith the Press and Public, including in the use of Social Media

- Press reports from the parish council and response to press inquiries will be via the clerk or via the reporter's own attendance at a meeting. (Refer to current Standing Orders)
- The clerk will discuss press reports, or comments to the media, with appropriate councillors or the chairman.
- Unless a councillor has been specifically authorised by the council to speak to the media on a particular issue, councillors who are asked for comment by the press should make it clear that it is a personal view and ask that it be clearly reported as their personal view.

# **Councillor Correspondence to external parties**

- The clerk sends council's correspondence from the council to other bodies.
- A councilor may only send correspondence to external parties if it has been authorised by the parish council. The councillor needs to ensure that it is written in their official capacity.

Where after discussion with the parish clerk, members wish to pursue an initiative on an unofficial/individual basis they are welcome to do so but should be mindful: -

- of the need to take care not to give the impression that the initiative has the support of, or

represents, official parish council policy;

- of the dangers of raising public expectation;
- of publicity or media coverage which may reflect on the parish council.

Accordingly, members MUST make it clear that they are acting in an unofficial/personal capacity.

As a general rule, individual members should not approach another body; statutory, voluntary or commercial organisation, other than in a personal capacity, seeking information which might be related to any parish council function.

Such approaches should be made formally by the parish council officers on behalf of the member in an official capacity. In this respect, members are advised to contact the parish clerk, as above. If a member is dissatisfied with the actions/advice of the parish clerk, s/he may ask for an item to be included on the agenda for council or appropriate committee.

A copy of all outgoing correspondence relating to the council or a councillor's role within it, should be sent to the clerk, and, if not via email and the Clerk cc'd in, it be noted on the correspondence "copy to the Clerk" so that the recipient is aware that the Clerk has been advised.

# **Communications with Parish Council Staff**

Telephone calls should be appropriate to the work of the parish council.

# E-mails:

- instant replies should not be expected;
- reasons for urgency should be stated;
- information to councillors should normally be directed via the clerk;
- e-mails from councillors to external parties in respect of council business should be copied to the clerk;
- councillors should acknowledge their e-mails when requested to do so.

# Meetings with the Clerk or other officers:

- wherever possible an appointment should be made;
- meetings should be relevant to the work of that particular officer;
- councillors should be clear that the matter is legitimate council business and not matters driven by personal or political agendas.

### APPENDIX A Part A Social Media

# Why do we need this policy?

There are far too many social media sites to list but some of the most popular examples are Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and YouTube.

The format and levels of interaction vary greatly from one to another. Whenever Council representatives use such sites they should familiarise themselves with the guidance that is set out in this policy.

We need to set clear guidelines for using social media sites to ensure they are used effectively as part of a wider communications mix and that their use does not expose the Council to security risks or reputational damage. Therefore we need a comprehensive policy to effectively manage and regulate the corporate use of social media.

Social media offers great potential for building relationships and improving the services that we provide. This policy will clearly set out how social media can be managed effectively and how any risks or pitfalls can be avoided or mitigated.

# Why use Social Media?

Social media has the advantages of reaching many people very quickly.

It can be used for one-to-one communications, and also one-to-many communications.

Media is shared widely and guickly. It can easily spread beyond the original audience.

Many different devices can pick up this information.

It can easily include text, photos, audio and video.

It allows participants to engage as they wish. They can just view the content, comment on it or even create content themselves.

Communication can be done in real time.

## Why not use Social Media?

As with any online activity there are often risks associated, the following types of risk have been identified with social media use:

Virus or other malware (malicious software) infection from infected sites.

Disclosure of confidential information.

Damage to the reputation of the Council.

Social engineering attacks (this is the act of manipulating people into disclosing confidential materia or carrying out certain actions. Social engineering is often conducted by individuals fraudulently claiming to be a business or client).

Civil or Criminal action relating to breaches of legislation.

# **Cautionary Reminders:**

Information is shared in the public domain and it should be expected that it can be viewed by anyone in the world.

There is often no need to register to view content. Content can be viewed anonymously, registration is only needed should one wish to actively participate.

Once published it cannot be taken back. Expect anything published, even if later deleted, to be permanently online.

Media is shared widely and quickly. It can easily spread beyond the intended audience.

Communication is expected in real time. While some flexibility can be achieved by publicizing our operating times, respondents expectations may remain fixed. There is no guarantee of truth. Gossip and misinformation exists and is easily spread online.

There is a lot of information online and it can be easy to spend a high proportion of time viewing and processing.

Each of these disadvantages can be managed or in some cases negated through the Herstmonceux Parish Council Social Media Policy.

#### APPENDIX A Part B

# **HERSTMONCEUX PARISH COUNCIL**

# **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

#### **Aims**

The aim of this policy is to ensure:

- engagement with individuals and communities and successful promotion of councilbased services through the use of social media;
- a consistent and corporate approach is adopted and maintained in the use of social media. That council information remains secure and is not compromised through the use of social media;
- that users operate within existing policies, guidelines and relevant legislation; that the council's reputation is not damaged or adversely affected

The council will make use of these tools to quickly disseminate information but carefully control their use in order to minimize any risk to the council.

The policy provides a structured approach to using social media and will ensure that it is effective, lawful and does not compromise council information or computer systems /networks.

That users (regardless whether they are using a personal or official account) ensure they are using social media sensibly and responsibly, and ensure that its use will not adversely affect the council or its business; not be damaging to the council's reputation and credibility. or otherwise violate any council policies.

## Responsibilities

- The Parish Clerk is the designated 'owner' of all social media accounts in Herstmonceux Parish Council's name. The Parish Clerk has overall responsibility for maintaining the council's website. The Assistant Clerk has overall responsibility for maintaining the council's Facebook and linked to Facebook accounts (Instagram).
- The opening of any new Social Media channel in Herstmonceux Parish Council's name should be approved by the Parish Clerk. Where a social media account has been set up by another officer, full access will be provided to the Parish Clerk. Ownership will be transferred where and when deemed necessary by the Parish Clerk.

- The Parish Clerk will be the site administrator who will be responsible for daily monitoring and maintenance of any content on official Herstmonceux Parish Council social media channels.
- Councillors and staff are at liberty to use their own social media accounts on any platform they choose. These must be identified as personal and make it clear that they do not represent the Council. However, both members and staff should be mindful of the Nolan Principles of Public Life at all times. Therefore, any personal social media account used in relation to the Council is the responsibility of the account holder and must comply with this social media policy.
- Councillors and Officers should at all times present a professional image and not disclose anything of a confidential nature. Comments of a derogatory, proprietary or defamatory nature must not be made, and care should be taken to avoid guesswork, exaggeration and colourful language. Guidelines on standards of behaviour expected can be found in this policy.
- Councillors should refrain from becoming embroiled into heated discussions online that fall
  under the remit of parish council responsibilities and duties, but pass on the discussion
  thread to the office staff for their assessment of whether a response is helpful or not.

# Monitoring content and measuring engagement

The Parish Council reserves the right to restrict or remove any content on Parish Council social media platform that is deemed in violation of social media policy or any applicable law.

Users will be informed that their posts may not be published/or may be deleted if they meet any of the criteria below:

- comments not topical to the article being discussed; comments that are politically motivated;
- profane language;
- material that perpetuates or promotes discrimination of protected characteristics as listed in the Equality Act 2010, including, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity; solicitation of commerce ie: Trying to sell items or encourage the sale of products or services not related to the Council;
- illegal conduct or encouragement/support of illegal activities;
- information that compromises or may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- content that violates the legal ownership interest of any other party.

Users may include any staff member acting as Herstmonceux Parish Council on social media channels but on some channels this may also include members of the public who have the opportunity to post on Herstmonceux Parish Council's page.

Posts to Herstmonceux Parish Council official channels that do not observe these standards may be retained or acknowledged when it would be beneficial to transparency. As anything put online will, in practice, remain online even when deleted it is often better not to try to hide it, rather deal with it openly and recognize the 'offence'. If and when this may be required is at the discretion of the Parish Clerk.

Impact of the Council's posts will be monitored, so far as each platform allows, to assist in measuring engagement.

#### The Law and Social Media

There are two ways to think about the harmful acts which may be committed using social media: either they are new acts, or they are acts already prohibited by criminal law but committed in the 'new' forum of social media as opposed to elsewhere. It is generally held that the latter is usually the case: social media is simply a platform for human beings to behave or misbehave; it is not about the medium, it is about the offence.

Harassment, malicious communications, stalking, threatening violence, incitement, defamation etc are all unlawful.

The Director of Public Prosecutions has published guidelines for the application of current statute law to prosecutions involving social media communications. The guidance is structured by conduct, relating different sorts of conduct to different potential offences, and some of the statutes which have a bearing are:

Data Protection Act 1998
Freedom of Information Act 2000
Human Rights Act 1998
Equalities Act 2010
Defamation Act 2013
Malicious Communications Act 1988
Communications Act 2003

# Guidelines on the use of Social Media

Standards of behaviour expected as a representative of Herstmonceux Parish Council (Official and personal accounts):

- Be aware of your responsibilities, as identified in this social media policy. Remember you are responsible for the content you post on social media.
- Ensure that you handle any personal or sensitive information in line with the Data Protection

Act.

- Know your obligations: you must comply with other council policies when using social media.
- Show respect to all. Be respectful of the authority, employees and other members of the council.
- Ensure that any mobile device you use to access social media is also secure to avoid others using your device to post under your own name.
- Do not get involved in an argument online, neither party tends to come off well. Limited space and a short time frame in which to phrase a response can inflame a situation.
- Try to introduce a constructive discourse by asking for useful feedback or assistance to change, or acknowledge the complaint and try to take the discussion offline.

Online there are individuals who purposefully start and perpetuate an argument. If someone is refusing to act rationally or unwilling to discuss offline be alert to this. If you encounter and identify such a situation the best response, having once given an opportunity to discuss rationally, is to cease the interaction.

#### Personal accounts

Use a disclaimer. When using social media for personal purposes, you must not imply you are speaking for the Council.

Make it clear that what you say is representative of your personal views only.

# APPENDIX B Defamation – briefing note – the legal framework

#### **Definitions**

A defamatory statement is one "which tends to lower a person in the estimation of right thinking members of society generally or to cause him to be shunned or avoided or to expose him to hatred, contempt or ridicule, or to convey an imputation on him disparaging or injurious to him in his office, profession, calling, trade or business" (Halsbury's Laws of England).

A defamatory statement made in writing or printed or in some other permanent form is called libel. The statement may be made in actual words or by images, pictures and the like. A statement made on radio or television is in permanent form. Websites; social media, and "blogs" are included in these definitions. A defamatory statement made orally or in some other transient form (e.g. a gesture) is called slander.

The law of defamation is governed by common law and statute such as the Defamation Act 1996 ("the 1996 Act") and the Defamation Act 2013 ("the 2013 Act"). One of the objects of 2013 Act, which came into force on 1 January 2014, is to discourage trivial defamation claims.

#### Actionable defamation

The person defamed can only sue the defamer where the defamatory statement is communicated (in legal terms "published") to some other person. Thus a defamatory letter written by person A about person B is not actionable if it is sent to Person B and seen only by him/her; but if it is sent to a third party, Person C, and is seen by him/her, there is communication and Person B can sue. However, if the letter is sent to Person C who passes it on unopened to Person B there will be no communication to a third party.

A statement is not defamatory unless it has caused or is likely to cause serious financial loss to a person (s.1 of the 2013 Act)

#### Who can bring an action for defamation?

Any living person can be defamed and bring an action against the defamer. Individual Councillors or council staff can sue for defamation. A company can also bring a defamation action

Public and local authorities (including local councils) can NOT be defamed and cannot sue. This is now settled law: the House of Lords held that it was in the highest interest of the public to allow a council to be subject to scrutiny and criticism, and it would be contrary to such interest for local authorities to have any common law right to bring an action for defamation (Derbyshire C.C. v The Times Newspapers Ltd [1993] 1.AER.1011).

In contrast, however, trading or non-trading corporations (ie bodies who have a identity, rights and responsibilities distinct from those individuals who form them), eg companies can be defamed by statements affecting their trading reputation.

An unincorporated body is an association of individuals, or bodies, not recognized by the law as having a separate legal existence eg NALC or a sports club. An unincorporated body cannot be

defamed. If words disparaging an unincorporated body reflect on certain individuals, those individuals could sue.

Even though a statement cannot be defamatory of a local authority itself the same statement can be personally defamatory of a member or officer who can bring a personal action in their own name.

# Who may be sued for defamation?

As a general rule, the person to be sued is the person who 'publishes' the defamatory statement. Every person who participates in publication may be liable as a 'publisher'. Thus where a libel appears in a newspaper, the originator, reporter, proprietor, editor, printer, publisher and vendor may be liable, as well as the author. S.10 of the 2013 Act confines legal action to the author, editor or publisher (defined by s.1 of the 1996 Act) of the defamatory statement unless it is not reasonably practicable to bring an action against them. However, innocent dissemination of a libel does not amount to publication, thus a postman who delivers a letter in the ordinary course of his duties without knowing it is defamatory is not liable as a publisher.

In contrast to the rule above, a public or local authority (including a local council) may be sued for defamation. A commercial trading company may also be sued. These bodies may also be liable for any act of publication by an agent or employee if done within the scope of his authority or employment. An agent or employee may also, as an individual, be liable as a publisher; but if acting under instruction he would be entitled to be indemnified against any personal financial loss. A local council may be liable as a publisher of libel in any of the following cases if:

- it directly authorizes the making of a defamatory statement (eg in the words of a resolution reproduced in its minutes):
- it authorises a member or instructs an officer to write a letter etc in terms which are defamatory;
- a member or an officer is given general authority to express the council's views on a matter and does so in defamatory terms; and
- a council cannot, in itself, be liable for slander, since acts which constitute slander can only be carried out by living persons. Thus the making of a slanderous remark by a councillor at a council meeting will result only in personal liability on the councillor. However a slanderous statement by a council employee, acting in the course of his employment, will make the employing council liable.

#### **Defences**

The main defences to an action for defamation:

- (i) Truth
- S.2 of the 2013 Act creates the defence of "truth". A defendant must prove that the statement is substantially true
- (ii) Absolute Privilege

'Absolute Privilege' means that a person who makes a defamatory statement in certain circumstances has an absolute defence (arising under various statutes) to a defamation action. The defences are relevant when there is a public interest in ensuring the ability of parties to speak freely without fear of legal action. Privilege can provide a defence for statements that may be false or damaging.

Those circumstances are:

- court or tribunal proceedings;
- proceedings in Parliament (Article 9 of the Bill of Rights 1688)
- contemporaneous fair and accurate reports in any medium of publication of court proceedings (s.14 of the 1996 Act);
- authorised reports of court or parliamentary proceedings (e.g. official law reports, Hansard) (s.2 of the Parliamentary Papers Act 1840);
- investigations by the local government Ombudsman; (s.32 of the Local Government Act 1974)
- statements made in the course of judicial proceedings; and
- affairs of State (unlikely to affect local councils).

Absolute privilege cannot be used as a defence for defamatory statements made in council meetings.

# (iii) Qualified privilege

The defence of qualified privilege can arise from statute or in common law. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of schedule 1 of Defamation Act 1996, fair and accurate reports of proceedings at a public meeting of a local authority (which includes local councils) have qualified privilege without explanation or contradiction. This means it is not possible to sue for defamation unless it can be proved that the statement was made with improper motive or malice. In the case of reports of local authority proceedings anyone who considers he has been defamed has a right to have the newspaper publish his explanation or contradiction.

At common law, the defence will apply where a person making a defamatory statement has an interest or a legal, social or moral duty to make it to the person to who it is made, and the latter has a corresponding interest or duty to receive it. Qualified privilege will normally attach also to statements (both written and oral) made by local councillors or council staff in the course of their official duties, and for the purposes of council business, provided that the statements are made in good faith and without any improper motive. Qualified privilege can be destroyed if the defendant is proved to have been actuated by spite or ill-will. So long as a person believes in the truth of what he says and is not reckless, malice cannot be inferred from the fact that his belief is unreasonable, prejudiced or unfair. A leading case on the defence of qualified privilege (which arose out of remarks made by an alderman of Bolton corporation at a council meeting) is Horrocks v Lowe [1974] 1 AER 662. The facts are of no particular relevance, but the following words of Lord Diplock in this Court of Appeal case are worth reproducing in full:

"My Lords, what is said by members of a local council at meetings of the council or of any of its committees is spoken on a privileged occasion. The reason for the privilege is that those who represent the local government electors should be able to speak freely and frankly, boldly and bluntly, on any matter which they believe affects the interests or welfare of the inhabitants. They may be swayed by strong political prejudice, they may be obstinate and pig-headed, stupid and obtuse; but they were chosen by the electors to speak their minds on matters of local concern and so long as they do so honestly they run no risk of liability for defamation of those who are the subjects of their criticism."

The words can also be applied to written communications sent by a local council in the course of official business.

- (iv) Publication on matters of public interest
- S.4 of the 2013 Act creates a defence if:
- the defamatory statement was, or formed part of, a statement on a matter of public interest and
- he or she reasonably believed that publishing the statement was in the public interest. The
  defence applies to a statement of both opinion and fact.

# (v) Honest opinion

S.3 of the 2013 Act creates the defence of "honest opinion" for a defamatory statement. As its name suggests, the defence cannot be used for statements of fact. The defendant must establish that the statement indicated the basis of his or her honest opinion and that an honest person could hold the opinion in the circumstances. The defence is available to anyone, whether or not he or she has a duty or interest to communicate the statement to another person (see "qualified privilege" above). The defence of honest opinion is primarily of use to journalists and others who report on the proceedings of public bodies (including local councils.

#### (vi) Offer of amends for unintentional defamation

This defence is available where the defendant did not know or have any reason to believe that the statement referred to the claimant and was untrue and defamatory of him.

S.2 of the 1996 Act provides an opportunity for a person to defend a defamatory statement. If a defamation action has been issued, the offer of amends must be made prior to service of the defence. The person who has published a defamatory statement must offer:

- a suitable correction to the statement complained of; and
- a suitable apology to the aggrieved person; and
- to publish a corrected statement and apology; and
- offer to pay the aggrieved person's costs and damages.

An offer to make amends may be in relation to the whole statement or a specific defamatory meaning ("a qualified offer").

It is always possible that an offer of amends may be made and accepted without the statutory formalities.

(vii) Innocent dissemination/operators of websites and secondary publishers S.1 of the 1996 Act provides a defence that is available to defendants who are not the author, editor or commercial publisher (e.g. printers, distributors, on-line service providers and live broadcasters). The

defendant must have taken reasonable care in relation to the publication of a defamatory statement. and must not have known or had reason to believe that he or she caused or contributed to the publication of a defamatory statement. S.1 is a defence that is available to internet service providers Website operators also have a defence under s.5 of the 2013 Act if they did not post the defamatory statement on the website; and the aggrieved person gave the website operator formal notice of complaint; and the website operator responded to the notice in accordance with the procedure set out in the Defamation (Operators of Website) Regulations 2013. The defence will not succeed if the aggrieved person cannot identify who posted the defamatory statement on the website. Guidance on the statutory procedure is available from the Ministry of Justice via the following link: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/2639138/defamatio n-guidance.pdf

# Implications for local councils

Local councils, councillors and council staff will be able to take advantage of the appropriate defence(s) if threatened with a defamation action. In particular, those of qualified privilege and fair comment will often be relevant. However, care should always be taken not to make statements which might be defamatory; if in doubt, they should take legal advice before taking any action. The same care should be exercised before publishing statements made by others, eg. by reading out letters from constituents at council meetings or reproducing complaints etc verbatim in the minutes of a meeting or permitting third parties to post material on their websites.

Where a potentially defamatory matter needs to be reported or recorded then so far as possible only the gist of it should be included in report or minute, so as to exclude publication of defamatory matter.

A distinction must be drawn between statements etc. made by councillors in their public and private capacities. A defamatory statement made in a private capacity does not attract any of the defences specified above, especially that of qualified privilege.

# Insurance

Pursuant to Article 6(3) of the Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order 2004 (SI.3082), a council is able to provide indemnity to members and officers in order to allow them to defend a defamation action. An indemnity cannot be provided for the bringing of such an action by a member or officer.

# **Court Proceedings**

If court action is threatened, the parties to the claim must comply with "Pre-Action Protocol for Defamation" published by the Ministry of Justice. This is intended to encourage the exchange of information between parties at an early stage of legal proceedings and to provide a clear framework for resolving the claim. The protocol forms part of the Civil Procedure Rules and can be accessed via the Ministry of Justice using the following link http://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/procedure-rules/civil/protocol/prot\_def

In case of potential challenge or uncertainty, first contact the Parish Clerk.