

## **ISLIP PARISH COUNCIL - REPRESENTATIVE PROTOCOL**

Guidelines for Councillors representing the council on another body and/or around the village.

### **Scope**

It is essential that Councillors represent both the Council and themselves appropriately to ensure that neither are misquoted or misrepresented and that individual and Council views remain distinct in conversations or meetings.

### **Situations**

Councillors may be requested, or volunteer to be, a Council representative on another body. This could include attending a group as the Council's representative or, attending a meeting of another authority as the Council's representative to pass on information or ask a question.

Additionally, as Councillors live in the village, they may often be stopped by residents who have information, ideas, or problems which they wish to be resolved or assisted with.

### **A Councillor as a Representative**

Islip Parish Council could have several groups which Councillor representatives attend on its behalf.

When attending these groups, Councillors acting as the Islip Parish Council representative should only put forward the views agreed by the Council, and not their own personal views. As a fundamental principle, all Councillors should abide by the democratic decisions of the Council once made.

When you are attending a meeting as the Islip Parish Council representative but wish to express a view, question or objection in your personal capacity or on behalf of another group or committee, this distinction must be clearly communicated to the meeting you are attending (see examples below).

No member of the Council should misrepresent or take action 'in the name of the Council' which they have not been authorised to do by the Council.

### **Examples**

1. The Parish Council decided it supported a particular planning application. You have decided to attend a meeting at Cherwell District Council because you, personally, don't like the planning application in question and have a strong objection towards its design and position. In this situation:
  - If you are allowed to speak, and you introduce yourself as 'Parish Councillor for Islip Parish Council' then you may only offer the Council's views - which was that the Parish Council supported the application.
  - If you wish to express your personal views at this meeting about the application, then you should not introduce yourself as an Islip Parish Councillor and must make it very clear to the meeting that you are expressing your 'Personal View'.
  - If you do not make this distinction clear about whose views you are expressing to the meeting then the Parish Council could be misquoted as not liking or objecting to the application when this was not the case.
2. You have been asked to attend a community meeting as the Council's representative, primarily to gather information about what is happening in Islip and to see if any items will affect the village.

You are only attending the meeting because you are the representative of Islip Parish Council and otherwise you would not be invited to this meeting. If the meeting goes off track and begins discussing an item which is not at all relevant to Islip but that you are interested in and have knowledge about, and you engage in conversation regarding issues, opinions or objections, you should make the meeting clearly aware that this is your own personal view and not the views of the Parish Council - remembering that you are only there because of the Parish Council.

3. Regarding a community meeting - you attend the meeting because you live in the village and have an issue to raise at the meeting with the Police. You are not the Council's representative for this meeting. You should raise your points as a resident and avoid mixing in any Parish Council opinions or decisions, as this would create confusion for other members at the meeting.

## **A Councillor as a Resident**

Councillors may be approached by residents when out in the village who have information or ideas to share or problems which they wish to be resolved or passed on. It is important that these queries are noted for either passing on, handing over or raising with the Council.

No member of the Council should promise or agree to do anything which they have not been authorised to do by the Council or take action 'in the name of the Council' which they have not been authorised to do by the Council.

1. A resident has noticed a pothole in their road and does not know who or how to report it, so, knowing you are a Parish Councillor, has asked for your help.

In this case:

- If you know which authority is responsible (i.e., District Council, County Council or another), inform the resident.
  - If not, inform them you will report to the Clerk to investigate.
  - For potholes specifically, as this is a County issue, you could:
    - Inspect the site, document it with photos and note the exact position and severity
    - Report directly to Oxfordshire County Council using their reporting systems
    - Pass information to any of the local District or County Councillors to take forward
    - Pass information to the Clerk to report
    - Provide the resident with information to report the fault themselves
2. A resident approaches you because they know you are a Parish Councillor. They ask if you might consider their idea which they feel would make things better for their age group. You go to inspect an area of land where they are suggesting changes and meet with the landowner and discuss the project. You agree with the resident that the Council thinks this is a good idea and promise that the Council will carry out this project.

The actions described in examples 2 and 3 are inappropriate for the following reasons:

- You should never be seen to be acting on behalf of the Council by engaging in discussions which the Council is not aware of, such as with a landowner.
- You as an individual should not be giving the Council's 'endorsement' or 'agreement' to anything without its express permission or knowledge.
- You should not be agreeing to carry out any works, however small, on behalf of the Council.

The recommended course of action when approached by a resident with an idea would be to listen to the suggestion and logic behind it, note down any particulars or positions and then raise this at a Parish Council meeting for the Council to consider.