

Communications Policy

Introduction

We recognise that consistent, effective, and appropriate communications – both external and internal – are essential for us to achieve our aims, objectives, and policies, and to maintain our credibility. This document outlines our principles for managing communications, including a summary of key strands of communications, and the responsibilities of committee members and others in relation to communications.

Scope

All members of the committee should be aware of this policy. The aim of the Policy is to reduce the risk of damaging or ineffective communications and to clarify who has responsibility for which aspects of this Policy.

Our Constitution, Privacy Notice, Complaints Policy and Social Media Policy provide guidance on the handling of specific types of communications.

Definitions

External communications include all the messages and information that the FCELH present to different audiences, whether directly (through telephone calls, letters, e-mails, newsletters, marketing materials, websites, social media channels) or indirectly through word of mouth. They include the messages and information shared with FCELH members; the Centre for Regional and Local History; members of the FCELH Facebook Group and other social media audiences; and the public.

Internal communications include messages and information (whether verbal or written) shared between committee members and individual members of the FCELH, volunteers, speakers, partners, suppliers, and other individuals involved in the Friends activities.

Statement of principles

The objective of this Policy is to help us:

- Improve how we communicate our values and identity.
- Promote transparent and open communication.
- Provide clear and well-judged information at the most appropriate level of detail in relation to the needs of the recipient.

The improvements and benefits which good communications should provide are:

- A greater likelihood of achieving our aims, objectives, and priorities.
- Presenting a more effective and purposeful ‘face’ to the world.
- A trusting working environment in which members and others can locate the information they require.

General principles

- All communications are important and need to be considered carefully.
- External and internal communications form part of strategic and business planning.
- Effective communications play a positive role in our day-to-day operations, through the consideration of the content and the audience for any message or information to be disseminated.
- We have a responsibility to foster good communications internally and externally.
- We foster a culture which encourages transparency of communication, clarity of style and the sharing of best practice and expertise across the FCELH.

Principles for managing external communications

Corporate and marketing communications should be considered as part of the wider perspective in which we wish to:

- Distribute high-quality information about our plans, projects, and programmes of activity.
- Ensure that our visual identity, as shown through all our print and digital communications, is clear, coherent and expresses our key values.
- Actively use social media platforms to promote our activities and share related information to the public
- Use feedback from social media channels to gain insights, answer queries and deliver key messages about how we communicate with our audiences and how we can better promote our activities.

External communications expressing political views, responses on potentially contentious issues or criticism or endorsement of organisations or individuals with potentially contentious views must be approved by the committee before release.

Principles for managing internal communications

Internal communications are actively managed to ensure that:

- Trustees and other committee members are informed of the most important information relating to the good management of the charity (for example, beneficiary numbers, volunteer numbers, level of donations, press coverage and results on key performance indicators) on a regular basis.
- Regular exchanges through email and telephone calls are thoughtful, respectful, efficient, and well disciplined.
- The informal exchange of information is encouraged through in-person and online meetings. FCELH will pay for a subscription to Zoom or other service registered in the name of the Chair or other officer.
- Information relating to the FCELH AGM and to matters of concern to FCELH members are communicated directly to members via email. Where members have not provided an email address, this information is sent via post.

Responsibilities

Committee

- The Committee has overall responsibility for ensuring that committee members, trustees, and members of the FCELH share information and knowledge through the best external and internal communications routes.
- Individual members of the committee are responsible for ensuring that non-members are aware of the key elements of this Policy if they are contributing or disseminating communications on behalf of the FCELH.

Chair

- The Chair has overall responsibility for ensuring that we offer clear and consistent messages about our objectives and activities.
- Promoting effective communications through the media, whether printed or broadcast, and seeking collaboration with appropriate media channels.

Publications officer

- Overseeing all printed communications from the charity, including the newsletter and other publications.
- For setting the standard for our brand.

IT Coordinator

- Responsible for distributing FCELH marketing and membership communications via email, social media platforms and the FCELH website.
- Administration and editorial control of the website and social media accounts.
- Ensuring brand guidelines are followed.
- Distributing member-only communications to members via email.

Secretary

- Sending member-only and event marketing material to members via post where no email address is provided to the FCELH.
- Managing and responding appropriately to general correspondence sent to the FCELH, informing the committee of the matter of the correspondence if it is appropriate to do so.

Procedures

- Trustees and committee members are guided in communications matters through their induction and access to all policies.
- Members of FCELH and members of the public may access relevant policies via the FCELH website.
- Members of the public contributing to social media sites are guided by the social media policies published in summary on those sites.