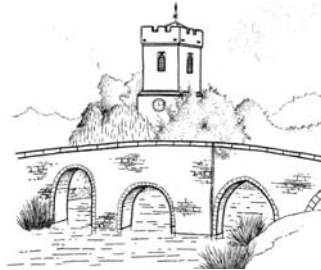


BIDFORD ON AVON PARISH COUNCIL

In the County of Warwickshire



Bidford-on-Avon Parish Council Social Media Policy

The aim of this Policy is to set out a Code of Practice to provide guidance to staff and Parish Councillors in the use of the Parish Council dedicated online communications, collectively referred to as social media.

Social media is a collective term used to describe methods of publishing on the internet. The policy covers all forms of social media and social networking sites which include (but are not limited to):

- Parish Council Website
- Facebook, Myspace and other social networking sites
- Twitter and other micro blogging sites
- Youtube and other video clips and podcast sites
- LinkedIn
- Bloggs and discussion forums
- Parish Council Emails

Who does it apply to?

The principles of the Policy apply all Council Staff and Parish Councillors. It is also intended for guidance for others communicating with the Parish Council.

The policy sits alongside relevant existing policies which need to be taken into consideration.

Use of Social Media

The use of social media will not replace other existing forms of communication. The Parish Council Newsletter will continue to be published bi-monthly in The Connection magazine and notices will continue to be published on the Parish Council's notice boards for the purpose of communicating information about the Parish Council to those who do not have access to computers/tablets, smart phones

etc. The website and other forms of social media will be used to enhance communication. Therefore existing means of communication should continue with social media being an additional option.

The Policy

- The Council has appointed the Clerk as moderator who will be responsible for posting and monitoring of the content ensuring it complies with the Social Media Policy. The moderator will have authority to remove any posts made by third parties from the Parish Council social media pages which are deemed to be of a defamatory, libelous or offensive nature. Such posts will also be reported to the Hosts (i.e. Facebook)
- The Council will appoint a nominated “Webmaster” to maintain and update the Parish Council Website
Under the Transparency Code for Parish Councils, which this Council has adopted, all information pertaining to the Council is made available online.
- Social media may be used to
 - Post dates of meetings and give link to the appropriate Agenda
 - Advertise events and activities
 - Good news stories linked website or press page
 - Vacancies
 - Providing new information.
- **Guidance for Councillors using the Council’s Social Media Presence**
 - Councillors are reminded they must abide by the **Members’ Code of Conduct** approved in December 2017
 - Councillors are reminded of the Bidford-on-Avon Parish Council Social Media Policy which applies
- **Guidance for the Clerk (Moderator) using Social Media**
 - As the Council’s Proper Officer, the Clerk must ensure the information provided is accurate
 - All information provided and replies made to questions raised must reflect Council Policy and/or current legislation
 - The Clerk must **never** express his/her opinions when posting in his/her official capacity
- **Guidance for All Users of the Parish Council’s Social Media**
All participants in any online communication, must
 - Be responsible and respectful; be direct, informative, brief and transparent.
 - Always disclose your identity and affiliation to the Parish Council, if relevant
 - Never make false or misleading statements.

- Parish Councillors should not present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment to the Council
- Keep the tone of your comments respectful and informative, never condescending or “loud.” Use sentence case format, not capital letters, or write in red to emphasis points.
- Refrain from posting controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks. Language that may be deemed as offensive relating in particular to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age or religion or belief should not be published on any social media site. The Moderator will remove these remarks and report them to the proper authority or agency.
- Avoid personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications.
- Never use an individual’s name or post any information that may identify the person
- Permission to publish photographs or videos on social media sites should be sought from the persons or organisations in the video or photograph before being uploaded.
- Respect the privacy of councillors and residents.
- Do not post any information or conduct any online activity that may violate laws or regulations
- Residents and Councillors should note that not all communication requires a response.
 - There will not be immediate responses to communications as they may be discussed by the Parish Council and all responses will be agreed by the Parish Council.
 - The Parish Clerk, as the moderator, will be responsible for all published responses.
 - If a matter needs further consideration it may be raised at either the open forum or as a full agenda item for consideration by a quorum of Councillors. the poster shall be informed via the page or direct message that this is the case.
 - Some communication from residents and other third parties may be required to be discussed at a Parish Council meeting. When this is necessary the item will be placed on the next available agenda. Any response will then be included in the minutes of the meeting.
- **Guidance on Contents on Social Media**
 - The nominated moderator shall remove any negative posts which may contain personal and inflammatory remarks, libelous or defamatory information without further comment or notification and report this action to Council at the earliest opportunity

- Councillors or parishioners who have any concerns regarding content placed on social media sites should report them to the Clerk of the Council. Misuse of such sites in a manner that is contrary to this and other policies could result in action being taken.

The Policy will be reviewed at regular intervals and whenever new legislation may apply.

This Policy was considered and adopted on 25th February 2019