

Kniveton Parish Council

Social Media Policy

Introduction

The Parish Council recognises the need to enhance and improve its communication and engagement with the residents of Kniveton, businesses and partner organisations by the use of online methods of communication. This policy provides guidance and reassurance as to how this can be achieved whilst the Parish Council retains authority and control over such communication.

This policy provides guidance to Kniveton Parish Councillors and those working for and with the council in the use of online communications. The policy covers all communication via the Parish Council website, emails and the social networking site Facebook.

The website will remain the main source of information about the Parish Council and its activities and the networking posts will largely be used to enhance/direct users to the website or other sources of information/advice.

The principles of this policy apply to Parish Councillors and the Parish Clerk and is also intended for guidance for others communicating with the Parish Council.

The policy sits alongside relevant existing Council policies e.g. Code of Conduct and Standing Orders, which should be taken into consideration.

Control of Social Media and website

The Parish Clerk (the 'moderator') will be the main administrator for social media activity, in terms of the website management, social media activity, response to messages and monitoring of the sites. The Parish Clerk will have overall responsibility for decisions involving social media and online communication activities.

Social media applications

The **website** may be used to:

1. Post minutes, dates of meetings and all related documents
2. Advertise events and activities
3. Publish good news stories
4. Publish vacancies
5. Share information from partners i.e. Police, Library and Health etc
6. Announce new information.
7. Refer resident queries to the Clerk and councillors
8. Provide information about the community

Emails will be used to distribute information of council business.

Facebook will be used to support the website information above and provide information and updates regarding activities within Kniveton and promote positive thoughts and comments from residents.

Kniveton Parish Council does not have a **Twitter** account so Twitter will not be used as a communication method to or from the Council.

General guidance for Councillors and Parish Clerk when using social media

1. When participating in any online communication;
 - a) Use the Parish Council Facebook page for any posts relating to Parish Council matters.
 - b) Be responsible and respectful; be direct, informative, brief and transparent.
 - c) If participating in communications on community forums and Twitter/Facebook Groups always disclose your identity and affiliation to the Parish Council. Never make false or misleading statements.
 - d) Parish Councillors should not present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment. All Parish Councillors need to be mindful of the information they post on sites and make sure personal opinions are not published as being that of the Council or bring the Council into disrepute or are contrary to the Council's Code of Conduct or any other Policies.
 - e) Keep the tone of your comments respectful and informative, never condescending or "loud." Use sentence case format; do not use capital letters or write in red to emphasis points.
 - f) 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.
 - g) Avoid personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications.
 - h) Never use an individual's name unless you have written permission to do so.
 - i) 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.
2. Respect the privacy of other councillors and residents.
3. Do not post any information or conduct any online activity that may violate laws or regulations, see below libel and copyright.
4. Residents and Councillors should note that not all communication requires a response.
 - a) It may not be possible to give an immediate response to communication as the matter may need to be discussed by the Parish Council and all responses agreed by the Parish Council. (If an immediate response cannot be given, an acknowledgement should be given in the first instance stating when the matter will be resolved e.g. at the next meeting of the Council).
 - b) The Parish Clerk will be responsible for all final published responses on the Parish Council Facebook page.
 - c) 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 person posting the communication shall be informed via the page or direct message that this is the case.

- d) 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.
5. The moderator shall remove any negative posts which may contain personal and inflammatory remarks, libelous or defamatory information without further comment or notification.
 - a) Spell and grammar check everything.
 - b) Correct any errors promptly.
6. Councillors or parishioners who have any concerns regarding content placed on social media sites should report them to the Parish Clerk. Misuse of such sites in a manner that is contrary to this and other policies could result in action being taken.
7. The Policy will be reviewed annually at the Annual General meeting.

Guidance to Facebook/Twitter users

1. To ensure that all discussions on Kniveton Parish Council's Facebook page are productive, respectful, energized and consistent, we ask you to follow these guidelines:
 - Be considerate and respectful of others. Vulgarity, threats or abuse of language will not be tolerated.
 - Differing opinions and discussion of diverse ideas are encouraged, but personal attacks on anyone, including Kniveton Parish Council members or staff, will not be permitted.
 - Share freely and be generous but be aware of copyright laws; be accurate and give credit where credit is due.
 - Stay on topic.
 - Refrain from using Twitter/Facebook for commercial purposes or to market products.
2. The Facebook page is not monitored 24/7 and we will not always be able to reply individually to all messages or comments received. However, we will endeavour to ensure that any emerging themes or helpful suggestions are passed to the relevant people.
3. Sending a message/post via Facebook will not be considered as contacting the Council for official purposes and we will not be obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through these channels (although we will always endeavour to do so). Instead, please contact the Clerk directly at the email address kniveton.pc@gmail.com
4. Please do not include personal/private information in your Facebook posts/messages to us.
5. We retain the right to remove comments or content that includes:
 - Obscene or racist content
 - Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
 - Potentially libellous statements
 - Plagiarized material; any material in violation of any laws, including copyright
 - Private, personal information published without consent
 - Information or links unrelated to the content of the forum

- Commercial promotions or spam

Non-compliance will not be tolerated and can result in a ban and other serious consequences.

6. Kniveton Parish Council are not responsible for the accuracy of content posted by any subscriber in any forum; opinions expressed in subscriber comments on Kniveton Parish Councils Facebook page do not necessarily represent those of Kniveton Parish Council.
7. All comments, once posted, become the property of Kniveton Parish Council and we reserve the right to reproduce, distribute, publish, display or edit. Derivative work can also be created from such postings or content, and used for any purpose, in any form and on any other media.
8. Kniveton Parish Council are not responsible, liable for and do not endorse the privacy practices of Facebook, Twitter or any linked websites. Your use of Facebook and any linked websites is at your own risk.
9. Kniveton Parish Council assumes no responsibility or liability for any injury, loss or damage incurred as a result of any use or reliance upon the information and material contained within or downloaded from these websites.
10. Facebook may occasionally be unavailable, and we accept no responsibility for this lack of service.
11. The presence of any advertisement on Facebook or Twitter is not an endorsement of the authenticity or quality of the goods, services or website and Kniveton Parish Council will not be held responsible for any claims arising in that respect.
12. We will not engage in/with, and we discourage posts or comments on, issues of a political nature.
13. Comments should not advertise commercial products or services.
14. By choosing to comment and/or utilise any Kniveton Parish Council Social Media site, users are deemed to agree to this policy.