



General Terms

The use of social media communication enables the Parish Council to interact in a way that improves the communications both within the Council and between the Council and the people, businesses and agencies it works with and serves.

The Council uses a dedicated email system to communicate and has a website with an active Contact Form. The Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications. Over time the Council may add to the social media channels of communication that it uses as it seeks to improve and expand the services it delivers. When these changes occur, this Policy will be updated to reflect the new arrangements.

All communications from the Parish Council will meet the following criteria.

- They will be civil, tasteful and relevant
- Not contain content that is knowingly unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive
- Not contain content knowingly copied from elsewhere, for which we do not own the copyright
- Not contain any personal information
- If it is official Council business, it will be moderated by either then Chair/Vice Chair of the Council or the Clerk to the Council
- Social media will not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising

In order to ensure that all discussions on the Parish Council social media sites are productive, respectful and consistent with the Parish Council's aims and objectives, 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 the Council members or staff, will not be permitted
- Share freely and be generous with official Parish Council posts but be aware of copyright laws; be accurate and give credit where credit is due.
- Stay on topic
- Refrain from using the Parish Council's social media sites for commercial purposes or to advertise market or sell products

The sites are 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 or authorities.

Please: *do not include personal/private information in your social media posts to us.*

Sending a message/post via social media will not be considered as contacting the Parish Council for official purposes and we will not be obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through these channels. Instead, please make direct contact with the Parish Clerk and/or members of the council via email.

We retain the right to remove comments or content that includes:

- Obscene or racist content
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Potentially libellous statements
- Plagiarised 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
- Alleges a breach of a Council's policy or the law

The Parish Council's response to any communication received which does not meet the above criteria will be to;

- ignore it
- inform the sender of our policy
- send a brief response as appropriate

This will be at the Council's discretion based on the message received, given our limited resources available.

Any information posted on our social media not in line with the above criteria will be removed as quickly as practically possible. Repeat offenders will be blocked from the site. The Council may post a statement that 'A post breaching the Council's Social Media Policy has been removed'. If the post alleges a breach of a Council's policy or the law the person who posted it will be asked to submit a formal complaint to the Council or report the matter to the Police as soon as possible to allow due process.

Parish Council Website

For information about the Parish Council's website, you can download our policies from here: [Knapton Parish Council Website](#)

Parish Council email

For information about the Parish Council's email, you can download our email policies from here: [Policies](#)

SMS (texting)

Members and the Clerk may use SMS as a convenient way to communicate at times. All are reminded that this policy also applies to such messages.

Video Conferencing eg: Zoom, Skype, Teams

If this medium is used to communicate, please note that this policy also applies to the use of video conferencing.

Internal communication and access to information within the Council

The Parish Council is continually looking at ways to improve its working and the use of social media and electronic communications is a major factor in delivering improvement.

Councillors are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct and the Data Protection Act in all their work on behalf of the Parish Council.

As more and more information becomes available at the press of a button, it is vital that all information is treated sensitively and securely. Councillors are expected to maintain an awareness of the confidentiality of information that they have access to and not to share confidential information with anyone. Failure to properly observe confidentiality may be seen as a breach of the Parish Council's Code of Conduct and will be dealt with through its prescribed procedures (at the extreme it may also involve a criminal investigation).

To be reviewed as and when appropriate.