

2020

# Social Media Policy

BROWN EDGE PARISH COUNCIL

## Introduction

The use of digital and social media now has a clear and compelling impact on all areas of local government enabling better and more direct contact between the Parish Council, the people and businesses it serves and the agencies that it works with.

This Social Media Policy aims to describe how the Parish Council will use social media to improve and expand the ways in which it communicates internally, with its local residents, local businesses and the various government (local and central) agencies that it deals with.

Social media provide alternative channels (to written correspondence, telephone and face to face conversation) for the Parish Council to inform and respond to questions and queries raised by people who live in, work in and visit Brown Edge. It also enables the Parish Council to deal more efficiently with the various agencies (e.g. the surrounding parishes, district council and the county council) that deliver services to local people.

## The Social Media Policy

Use of digital and social media will form an integral part of how Brown Edge Parish Council delivers its services in a way that improves the communications both within the Parish Council and between the Parish Council and the people businesses and agencies it works with and serves.

The Parish Council uses its website, Facebook and email to communicate with people who live in, work in and visit Brown Edge.

The Parish Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications. We may ask those who contact us for their preferred channel of communication when we deal with them.

Over time the Parish Council may add to the channels of communication that it uses as it seeks to improve and expand the services it delivers. When these changes occur this Social Media Policy will be updated to reflect the new arrangements.

## Our Rules and Expectation

1. Most online communities have their own rules and guidelines, which we will always abide by.
2. We promise that any communications (this includes all content on the Parish Council's web site) from the Parish Council and its councillors will meet the following criteria:
  - a. be civil, tasteful and relevant;
  - b. not contain content that is unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive or favour one business or community over another.
  - c. not contain content copied from elsewhere, for which we do not own the copyright or have permission to publish.
  - d. not contain any personal information, other than necessary basic contact details;
  - e. social media will not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising

- f. All communication shown on our social media will seek to inform parishioners about the operation of the council and not individual councillors save where acting on behalf of the council.
  - g. It will not pass opinions about activities of 3<sup>rd</sup> parties
  - h. Any content placed on social media will be approved by the Council or its delegated agents
  - i. All correspondence and content must come via the Clerk of the Council who will instruct in writing by email the delegated administrators of the website and Facebook page changes or items that should be displayed.
  - j. Items that councillors deem relevant to inform the public about can request this at a council meeting
  - k. Any councillor who feels content should be added between meetings should contact the clerk directly and make the request. If the clerk feels this request inappropriate, then he should seek guidance from the Chair of the Council. If he thinks it is appropriate, then he instructs the administrators to add the item.
  - l. It is incumbent on all councillors to be aware what changes have been made and if they are unhappy about any content then they should raise this with the chair of the council ASAP
3. Equally, we expect any communications to the Parish Council to meet the following criteria:
- a. be civil, tasteful and relevant;
  - b. not contain content that is unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive;
  - c. not contain content copied from elsewhere, for which the enquirer does not own the copyright;
  - d. not sending large volumes of the same message (also called "spamming");
  - e. not to contain anyone's personal information, other than necessary basic contact details;
4. If anyone attempts to communicate to the Parish Council (or councillor in their capacity as a parish councillor) outside the guidelines above, the council (or councillor) should not respond other than to say that the communication falls outside point 3 of our communication policy available for inspection on our website.
5. Councillors are of course free to use social media in their own name but must make clear that any opinions are their own and must not imply any preferred rights are available to themselves or that they are acting on behalf of the council in any of their interactions.

## Website

The website will be up to date and maintained with notice and agendas of meetings, draft minutes, and approved minutes.

Going forward it should provide councillors with a document pack of all the relevant information for council meetings and a copy of passed resolutions in line with the transparency code.