

SHARNBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Introduction

The use of digital and social media now enables better and more direct contact between Sharnbrook Parish Council, parishioners and businesses it serves, and the agencies it works and liaises with. Social media is a collective term for the ways to create and publish information via the internet and for the purpose of this policy refers to the Parish Council website, Facebook page and Twitter only.

This policy details how Sharnbrook Parish Council will use social media to improve and expand the ways in which it communicates with its local residents, local businesses and various government agencies it deals with.

Social media provides an alternative channel to written correspondence, telephone and face to face conversation to enable the Parish Council to inform and respond to questions and queries raised by people who live in, work in and visit the parish. It also enables the Parish Council to deal more efficiently with the various agencies that deliver services to local people.

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

Sharnbrook Parish Council has a corporate presence on the web and an e-mail channel which it uses to communicate with residents, as well as those working in and visiting the parish. The Parish Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications, and the Clerk and/or Members may ask for a preferred channel of communication. 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 the Social Media Policy will be updated.

Social Media

All communications from Sharnbrook Parish Council will meet the following criteria:

- Be civil respectful and relevant
- Not contain content that is unlawful, libellous, harassing. Defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive
- Nor contain content copied from elsewhere for which it does not own the copyright
- Not contain any personal information, other than necessary basic contact details
- Will be moderated by the Clerk to the Parish Council
- Will not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising.

All communications to the Parish Council will meet the following criteria:

- Be civil, respectful and relevant
- Not contain content that is unlawful, libellous, harassing. Defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive
- Not contain content copied from elsewhere. For which the enquirer does not own the copyright
- Not contain any personal information, other than necessary basic contact details
- Will not seek to disseminate any political advertising

Approved 13.6.23 and reviewed 10.06.2025

The Clerk to the Council is responsible for approving and arranging publication of content to the website, Twitter and Facebook page. On occasion requests for information may be forwarded to a Member(s) for their consideration and response, which will then be directed back via the Clerk to the Council. -

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SharnbrookParishCouncil> The Parish Council may choose to respond to a comment received, particularly if one response can be considered to address all. The Parish Council may permit local organisations to maintain a presence on its Facebook page, subject to the adherence of the criteria detailed above. The Council reserves the right to remove any information considered in breach of the above. It should be clearly identified that such information and its content is not the direct responsibility of the Parish Council.

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/SharnbrookPC> The Parish Council may choose to re-tweet comments that mention the Parish Council.

Website: The Parish Council's website, www.sharnbrook-pc.gov.uk, is an integral part of the Parish Council. Its purpose is to communicate with residents, local clubs, societies and organisations as well as external bodies including Bedford Borough Council and Local and/or Central Government organisations. The Parish Council will aim to ensure that all information within the website is up to date and relevant.

The following items may be included:

- Information on village clubs, societies and organisations and events
- Links to the following external websites
 - Bedford Borough Council
 - Healthwatch
- Links to approved charities (as requested)
- Parish Council agendas
- Parish Council minutes
- Parish Council committee minutes
- Parish Council Financial Information as permitted under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (as amended)
- Parish Council policies and Procedures
- Parish Council members information

Other items may be included at the Clerk's discretion, and any items for publication on the website should be emailed to the Clerk to the Council at clerk@sharnbrook-pc.gov.uk.

The following will NOT be included:

- Articles affiliated to, or promoting any political organisation
- Commercial advertisements
- Publicity for any non-charitable fund-raising event

The Clerk to the Council and Members will treat all information confidentially, securely and sensitively. Failure to observe this may be seen as a breach of the Parish Councils code of Conduct and dealt with through its prescribed procedures.

Emails: Sharnbrook Parish Council maintains two email addresses - sharnbrookpc@gmail.com and clerk@sharnbrook-pc.gov.uk (primary) which is reviewed frequently. The Clerk to the Council is responsible for dealing with all emails received and will forward to a Member(s) or external agency, or respond as appropriate.