

Brundall Parish Council

Communications and Social Media Policy



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The use of digital and social media and electronic communication enables the Parish Council to interact 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 has a website, a Facebook page, and uses email to communicate. The Parish Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications. 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 Policy will be updated to reflect the new arrangements.

The Parish Council Facebook page and website are intended to provide information and updates regarding activities and opportunities within our Parish and promote our community positively.

Rules of engagement

Communications from the Parish Council will meet the following criteria:

- 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, other than necessary basic contact details;
- If official council business it will be moderated by either the Chair/Vice Chair of the Parish Council or by the Clerk to the Parish Council;
- Social media will not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising.

Facebook and other Social Media sites

In order to ensure that all discussions on the Parish Council's Social Media are productive, respectful and consistent with the Council's aims and objectives, we ask users 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 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 the Council's Facebook page 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 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. Instead, please make direct contact with the Council's Clerk and/or members of the council by emailing.

The Council retains 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
- Allegations of a breach of a Council's policy or the law

The Parish Council's response to any communications received not meeting the above criteria will be to either ignore, inform the sender of our policy or 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 the Facebook page not in line with the above criteria will be removed as quickly as practically possible. Repeat offenders will be blocked from the Facebook page. The Parish 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.

Correspondence

The Clerks to the Council shall open and read all correspondence as soon as it is delivered and shall assess its level of urgency. Whenever possible, the correspondence shall be held for consideration at the next Council or committee meeting, as appropriate.

In the case of an emergency, where the correspondence demands attention before the date of a Council or committee meeting, the Clerks to the Council shall seek direction from the Chairman of the Council or, in their absence, from the Vice-Chairman.

Letters from the Council shall be written on Parish Council headed paper and shall be signed by either:

- a) The Clerk to the Council;
- b) The Chairman of the Council; or
- c) In the absence of the Chairman of the Council, the Vice-Chairman of the Council.

All correspondence should be sent to:

Brundall Parish Council
Brundall Memorial Hall
Links Avenue
Brundall
Norfolk NR13 5LL

Parish Council email

The Clerk(s) to the Council can be contacted at: clerk@brundall-pc.gov.uk and deputy.clerk@brundall-pc.gov.uk.

The email accounts are monitored mainly during office hours, Monday to Friday, and the Clerks aim to reply to all questions sent as soon as they can. The Clerks are responsible for dealing with email received and passing on any relevant mail to members or external agencies for information and/or action. All communications on behalf of the Council will usually come from the Clerks, and otherwise will always be copied to the Clerks.

Councillors are reminded that an e-mail response can be considered legally binding and, therefore, Councillors should, wherever possible, request that the Clerks to the Council sends e-mails on their behalf under the Parish Council's e-mail address. Under no circumstances shall Councillors communicate directly with outside bodies on behalf of Brundall Parish Council unless specifically instructed to do so by the full Parish Council.

In all cases where a Councillor sends an e-mail on Parish Council business, then that e-mail shall be copied to the Clerks to the Council, the Chairman of the Council and the Vice-Chairman of the Council.

Individual councillors are at liberty to communicate directly with parishioners in relation to their own personal views and, if appropriate, copy to the Clerks, but must make it very clear that they are not writing on behalf of the Council. NB any emails copied to the Clerks become official and will be subject to The Freedom of Information Act.

These procedures will ensure that a complete and proper record of all correspondence is kept.

Website

Brundall Parish Council shall create and manage a website - <https://brundallpc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk/>.

The website shall be for the use and benefit of Brundall Parish Council only and shall not be freely used by other organisations, although Brundall Parish Council may, from time to time, include pages submitted by other such organisations.

Access for editing the website and its content will be limited to the Clerks to the Council and a nominated Councillor as approved by the Full Council.

The Clerks to the Council shall:

- a) Ensure the accuracy of all website content;
- b) Ensure that all data included is up to date and relevant;
- c) Mount all content on the website; and
- d) Ensure that they are fully conversant with the latest website management developments.

The website shall include as a minimum:

- a) The name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the Clerks to the Council with a statement that all matters should be addressed to them;

- b) A directory of Council Members;
- c) Constitution of Council committees;
- d) The Standing Orders of the Council;
- e) The Code of Conduct of the Council;
- f) Agenda for all meetings of the Council and its committees;
- g) Agreed Minutes of all meetings of the Council and its committees;
- h) A copy of the last available audited accounts of the Council;
- i) Hyperlinks to the websites of Norfolk County Council, Broadland District Council, and Norfolk Association of Local Councils.

The website shall carry no advertising of a commercial nature.

Where necessary, the Clerk may direct those contacting us to our website to see the required information, or they may forward their question to one of our Parish Councillors for consideration and response. The Clerk may not be able to respond to every comment we receive.

SMS (texting)

Members and the Clerk may use SMS as a convenient way to communicate at times. This policy also applies to such messages.

Video conferencing, e.g. Zoom

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

Notice Boards

The Parish Council shall provide and maintain notice boards within the parish as deemed necessary at the time.

Only Parish Council, local authority related notices, and local non-political events shall be displayed on Parish Council notice boards unless a particular notice is specifically agreed by the full Parish Council.

In addition to Parish Council notice boards, the Parish Council shall provide and maintain a Community notice board located in the public car park on The Street. Notices for the benefit of the community may be displayed on the Community notice board.

The Council reserves the right to determine what is an appropriate notice for public display. Under no circumstances shall notices of an offensive nature be displayed on any Parish Council or Community notice board.

The Clerks to the Council shall be responsible for the management of notice boards and shall ensure that all notices are clean, legible and up to date.

Flyposting

Flyposting is illegal and Brundall Parish Council will actively discourage any act of business flyposting in the parish in accordance with the following procedure.

On learning of a case of flyposting within the parish, the Clerks shall immediately contact the person(s) or organisation(s) responsible for it and

- a) Inform them that flyposting is illegal;
- b) Advise them that Brundall Parish Council will, on request, display non-commercial posters free of charge on its web site and notice boards and advise them of their options.

Should the offending poster(s) not be removed within a reasonable time, then the Parish Council shall again contact those responsible and inform them that unless the offending material is removed immediately the Council will report the matter to Broadland District Council with the aim of obtaining a prosecution.