

SWANWICK PARISH COUNCIL
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



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 Swanwick parish.

The Social Media Policy

Use of digital and social media will form an integral part of how Swanwick 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 has a corporate presence on the web and an e-Mail channel which it uses to communicate with people who live in, work in and visit Swanwick parish.

The Parish council also has a presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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 Expectations

Most online communities have their own rules and guidelines, by which we will always abide.

We promise that any communications (this includes all content on the Parish Council's web site) from the Parish Council will meet the following criteria:

- be civil, tasteful and relevant;
- not contain content that is unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive;
- not contain any personal information, other than necessary basic contact details;
- will be moderated by the Parish Council;
- social media will not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising;
- not contain content copied from elsewhere, for which we do not own the copyright.

Equally, we expect any communications to the Parish Council to meet the following criteria:

- be civil, tasteful and relevant;
- not contain content that is unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive;
- not sending large volumes of the same message (also called "spamming");
- not to contain anyone's personal information, other than necessary basic contact details.

The Parish Council will not engage in debate/discourse via its social media platforms, however, it will invite people to attend council meetings to share any issues or observations they wish addressed by the council.

When addressing issues or observations from parishioners at council meetings, it should be noted here that the ruling of the Chairman of the Parish Council is final and may not be challenged.

The Parish Council reserves the right to remove any comments posted on its social media platform that does not meet the Parish Council's "rules and expectation" outlined above.

The Parish Council also reserves the right to remove any or all of a local group's information from any of our online platforms if it feels that content does not meet the Parish Council's "rules and expectation" outlined above.

Where content on the web site or social media platforms is maintained by a local group it should be clearly marked that such content is not the direct responsibility of the Parish Council.

Use of Social Media during Parish Council meetings

The Parish Council welcomes the use, by members of the public, of social media, filming, recording and reporting at its meetings provided this does not disrupt or otherwise have an adverse effect on the meeting. Intention to use social media, filming or recording should be notified to the Clerk or the Chair at the beginning of the meeting.

Telephones and other devices should be switched to silent mode or switched off completely as a matter of courtesy.

Oral reporting or commentary is not allowed within the meeting room but may be conducted from outside.

Any speaker not wishing to be filmed should make this clear at the start of their speech. The ruling of the Chairman at the meeting is final and may not be challenged.

Internal communication and access to information within the Parish Council

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

Parish Councillors are expected to abide by the "our rules and expectation" section (shown earlier in this document) 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.

Parish Councillors are expected to maintain an awareness of the confidentiality of all information that they have access to and not to share that information with anyone unless they are sure that it is reasonable to do so.

Swanwick Parish Council Social Media Policy

	Date	
Policy approved	17/03/2016	Adopted
Reviewed	June 2019	