



Mountnessing Village Council

Social Media Policy

January 2024

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 Village Council, the people, and businesses it serves and the agencies that it works with.

This Social Media Policy aims to describe how the Village 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 Village Council to inform and respond to questions and queries raised by people who live in, work in, and visit the parish of Mountnessing. It also enables the Village 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 Mountnessing Village Council delivers its services in a way that improves the communications both within the Village Council and between the Village Council and the people, businesses, and agencies it works with and serves. The Village 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 the village of Mountnessing.

The Village 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 Village 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

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

We promise that any communications (this includes all content on the Council's website) from the Village 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 content subject to copyright.
- not contain any personal information, other than necessary basic contact details.
- will be moderated either by the Clerk/ Officers of the Parish Council or a councillor appointed to do so.
- social media will not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising

Equally, we expect any communications to the Village 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 contain content copied from elsewhere, for which publisher does not own the copyright.
- not send large volumes of the same message.
- not to contain anyone's personal information, other than necessary basic contact details.

Channels and responsibilities - Parish Council website

Our web site is hosted and maintained by Sue Lees Consultancy and is normally continuously available.

The Village Council will maintain one web site www.mountnessingvillagecouncil.org.uk

The Clerk, other officer or Sue Lee's Consultancy(at request from the Clerk) is responsible for publishing content on the website.

Where necessary, we may direct those contacting us to our website to see the required information, or we may forward their question to one of our Parish Councillors for consideration and response.

We may not respond to every comment we receive particularly if we are experiencing a heavy workload.

The Village Council may, at its discretion, allow and enable approved local groups to have a presence on its website for the purpose of presenting community information about the group's activities. The local group would be responsible for advising the Clerk of updates to the content and ensuring that it meets the Parish Council's "rules and expectation" (see previous page) for the web site.

The Village Council reserves the right to remove any or all a local group's information from the web site if it feels that content does not meet the Village Council's "rules and expectation" for its website.

Where content on the website is maintained by a local group it should be clearly marked that such content is not the direct responsibility of the Village Council.

Village Council e-mail channel

Our e-mail account is monitored throughout the week, and we aim to reply to all questions sent as soon as we can and within 5 working days.

The Village Council will maintain one e-mail address, currently it is,
clerk@mountnessingvillagecouncil.org.uk

The Clerk to the Village Council/ appointed officers are responsible for dealing with email received and passing it on to the relevant Councillor or external agency to deal with.

The recognised procedure for the sending of e-mails from the Village Council to residents, businesses and organisations is that they will be sent by the Clerk, Deputy Clerk or RFO to the Village Council.

Where Village councillors need to communicate with residents, businesses, and organisations they should, preferably, keep to the recognised procedure by sending their e-mail to the Clerk to the Village Council. Where, for reasons of urgency, it is necessary to reply directly to an external email enquiry all such outgoing e-mails must be copied to the Clerk to the Village Council to ensure that a complete and proper record of all correspondence is kept.

Village Council Twitter channel - Currently the Village Council does not operate a Twitter channel.

Village Council Facebook channel Mountnessing Village Council does have a Facebook page for the publication of information relating to the operation of the Village Council.

Village Council YouTube channel - Currently the Village Council does not operate a YouTube channel.

Village Council Instagram Page – Currently the Village Council does not operate an Instagram Page

Internal communication and access to information within the Village Council.

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

As more and more information are available “at the press of a button” it is vital that all information is treated sensitively and securely. Village 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. Failure to properly observe confidentiality may be seen as a breach of the Village Council’s Code of Conduct and will be dealt with through its prescribed procedures. (At the extreme it may also involve a criminal investigation).

Approved for issue at the Full Council meeting of the 8th of January 2024