

Communications Policy – September 2016 Revision

1. Introduction

This communication policy aims to describe how Blofield Parish Council will use various media to improve and expand the way in which it communicates with the people and businesses it serves, and the agencies it works with.

2. Communications Rules & Expectations

We promise that any communications from the Parish Council will meet the following criteria:

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

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

- be civil , tasteful and respectful;
- not contain content that is unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or sexually offensive;
- not contain content copied from elsewhere, for which the enquirer does not own the copyright;
- not send large volumes of the same message (also known as spamming);
- not contain anyone's personal information, other than necessary basic contact details.

3. Parish Council Website

Blofield Parish Council will maintain one web site. <http://parishcouncil.blofieldvillage.org.uk/>

The Blofield Parish Council website is hosted by <insert hosting name> and is maintained by Martin Brocklebank and is normally continuously available.

The Clerk to the Parish Council is responsible for the timely submissions to the web administrator of content to be published on the web site.

Blofield Parish Council

Blofield Parish Council may, at its discretion, allow and enable approved local groups to have and maintain a presence on its website for the purpose of presenting information about the groups activities. The local group would be responsible for maintaining content and ensuring it meets the Parish Council's rules and expectations. The Parish Council reserves the right to remove any or all of the local groups' information from the web site if it feels that the content does not meet the Parish Council's rules and expectations for the web page.

Where content is maintained by a local group, it should be clearly marked to indicate that such content is not the direct responsibility of the Parish Council.

4. Written Communication

When necessary, Blofield Parish Council will use written forms of communication such as articles displayed on the Parish Notice Boards, submissions to Focal Point, Blofield News and any other village leaflets / magazines to inform parishioners accordingly.

All printed and written forms of communication are expected to abide by the 'Communications Rules and Expectations' outlined above.

5. Blofield Parish Council E-mail

Blofield Parish Council will maintain one email address. parishclerk@blofield.net

The email account is monitored mainly during the weekday, Monday to Friday usually during office hours , 9 to 5, and we aim to respond to questions as quickly as we can.

The clerk to the Parish Council is responsible for dealing with email received and, where appropriate, passing it on to the relevant Councillor or relevant agency to deal with.

Where necessary, we may direct those individuals contacting us to look at the Parish Council website to access the required information, or the query could be forwarded to a Parish Councillor for consideration and response.

When Parish Councillors wish to email local residents, businesses or organisations, they should either direct their email to the clerk for onward transmission or copy in the clerk accordingly. This is to ensure that a record of all council correspondence is kept.

When using email Parish Councillors are expected to abide by the 'Communications Rules and Expectations' outlined above.

6. Social Media – Facebook

Social media provides an alternative channel (to written correspondence, telephone and face to face conversations) for the Parish Council to inform, and to respond to questions and queries raised by, the people who live in, work in and visit Blofield Parish.

Blofield Parish Council

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

Blofield Parish Council will use Social Media to publicise local events, share important information with the community and to listen to concerns.

The appointed moderators will maintain the Blofield Parish Facebook account.

The account will be checked at least once daily in order to respond to questions or comments made by visitors to the account. The moderator cannot commit the Parish Council and the moderators' comments should be based on publicly available information e.g. Minutes of Meetings, Policies etc. If a question is too technical it will be referred to the Parish Clerk.

Depending on the nature of the question or comment, there may not be a response until it has been discussed by the Parish Council and the moderators will discuss it becoming an agenda item with the Clerk and Chairman.

Whilst it is important to let people have their say, if any posts do not comply with the 'Communication Rules and Expectations' section the moderators will ask the individual to remove the post or remove the post themselves. If necessary abusive individuals will be blocked from further use of the Council's Facebook page.

Blofield Parish Council reserves the right to remove any content or posts that do not meet the expectations outlined above.

We may not reply to every comment or post published if we are experiencing a particularly heavy workload.

When using Social Media, Parish Councillors are expected to abide by the 'Communications Rules and Expectations' above in all their work on behalf of the Parish Council.

7. Confidentiality of information.

As more and more information becomes readily 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 share that information unless they are sure it is reasonable to do so.

Failure to properly observe confidentiality may be seen as a breach of the Parish Councils Code of Conduct and be dealt with through prescribed procedures.

Policy adopted by Blofield Parish Council on 2016.

Policy revised on 2016.

Signed by Chairman on behalf of Council.