

# Botley and North Hinksey Parish Council Website Policy

Adopted by Botley and North Hinksey Parish Council July 27<sup>th</sup> 2023.

This policy covers the management of the Botley and North Hinksey Parish Council Website, in particular:-

- The scope of the website.
- Management of the website content and structure, and criteria and procedures for making changes or additions to the Website.
- Roles of the Communications Committee, the Webmaster and the Parish Clerk.

## Definitions

- **Parish** - North Hinksey Parish
- **Parish Clerk** - Parish Clerk to Botley and North Hinksey Parish Council
- **Council** - Botley and North Hinksey Parish Council
- **Councillor** - Councillor on Botley and North Hinksey Parish Council
- **Committee** – one of the recognised Committees / Working Groups (Advisory Committees) of Botley and North Hinksey Parish Council
- **Communications Committee** – Communications Committee of Botley and North Hinksey Parish Council
- **Administrator** – Any individual who has access to the programme via which changes are made to the content of the Website (normally consisting of designated members of the Communications Committee including the Webmaster and the Parish Clerk)
- **Website** - Botley and North Hinksey Parish Council Website
- **Webmaster** – Councillor with overall responsibility for managing those sections of the website which are not the direct responsibility of the Parish Clerk
- **Archive, or “Archival Material”** - Material that is a record of Council business, e.g. meetings, reports, surveys, plans, or correspondence referred to in the Minutes, Official correspondence received or sent out by Council.

## 1. Website Hosting Arrangements

1.1 The Council is committed to operating a website hosted by a 3rd party provider, having no other connection with the NHPC. The present host is one of a number of companies who provide website hosting services to local authorities and NHPC is committed to using one of them. The current system is a “Content Management System” where the Council itself has direct control of day-to-day editing, updating and maintenance of content.

## 2. What the Website should contain

2.1 Subject only to the requirements of the law, Council has the right to determine what should or should not be included on the Website.

2.2 Current legislation requires that the following information must be accessible to the public on the Website:

- Code of Conduct
- Standing Orders
- Council Policies
- Freedom of Information Scheme
- Councillors' Register of Interest forms
- Audited Annual Accounts

Any subsequent additional requirements by Government must also be adhered to and Council has no right to remove any of this content unless changes to legislation no longer require it to be on public display on the Website.

2.3 The Website shall contain material that arises from Council business such as agendas and minutes, policies, and other factual information about the Council and Councillors including contact details. It may also include material that has been commissioned by the Council, such as reports or surveys or material that is directly derived from these.

2.4 The Website may also contain other appropriate material of practical use for Councillors and Parishioners, such as history and geography of the Parish, news of local events, or any other material of a non-controversial nature. The Website may also possess interactive functionality, customary for local authority websites, (such as questionnaires, visitor response facilities, links to other sites etc.).

2.5 The Website shall in principle not contain material of a deliberately contentious, offensive or disputatious nature, or material that criticises or implies criticism of one or more members of the public, individual Councillors, groups of Councillors or the Council as a whole. However, Council meetings can be disputatious, and this is recorded in the Minutes and, once passed, this material may appear on the Website in the minutes or otherwise. Additionally it can happen that Council may approve material for inclusion on the Website that not everybody necessarily agrees with.

2.6 Regardless of what has been voted on by Council, the Website shall not contain any material that is libellous or defamatory or in any way against the law or which could expose the Council to legal challenge.

### **3. The role of the Communications Committee and designated Administrators**

3.1 The day-to-day maintenance of the Website is carried out by identified members of the Communications Committee. The Communications Committee shall contain the Parish Clerk plus a minimum of four councillors, one of whom is designated as the Webmaster (the chief Administrator) and at least one other designated simply as an Administrator. N.B. The Chairman of the Communications Committee does not necessarily need to be the Webmaster or another of the Administrators.

3.2 In addition to regular maintenance of the Website the Administrators are responsible for identifying potential improvements to the Website content, structure, management systems and related matters, and making recommendations to Council.

3.3 Members of the Communications Committee designated as Administrators are to be given access to make amendments to the content of the Website by the Parish Clerk, who retains authority to manage the Administrators function within the website management programme.

3.4 The Parish Clerk is allocated responsibility for managing a section of the website which is currently as listed in Appendix 1 of this document. The pages in this section include all content required by legislation plus other general administrative content.

3.5 The Webmaster and other Administrator members of the Communications Committee are allocated responsibility for managing all other content which is currently as listed in Appendix 2 of this document. The pages in this section include the Home page, content relating to the various committees and other information not directly related to Council business. The Webmaster has overall responsibility for these sections of the website and would normally be expected to be the individual making amendments to content, however, they can delegate tasks to any other Administrator Councillor in the Communications Committee in order to spread the workload effectively.

3.6 The Webmaster or Parish Clerk may also ask for additional external professional or voluntary help as necessary (e.g. an IT consultant), subject to reasonable cost limits, no identifiable conflict of interests, and prior agreement with the Council. Such expenditure should normally be planned and budgeted for the year ahead. In those circumstances temporary access as an Administrator could be set up by the Parish Clerk if necessary in order to allow agreed improvements to be made. Non-Councillors (other than the Parish Clerk) are not to be given permanent Administrator access even in the situation where they have been co-opted onto the Communications Committee.

3.7 The Webmaster and other Administrator Councillor members of the Communications Committee should operate co-operatively with the Parish Clerk on the management of the Website. The Parish Clerk or the Webmaster may from time to time help in each other's areas (as identified in sections 3.4 and 3.5 above), but, in the interests of good and harmonious practice, changes (other than minor typographical corrections) to each other's areas are best done with some kind of consultation with the other party. In case of disagreement the normal rules governing the relationship of the Parish Clerk with individual Councillors and with the Council as a whole shall apply.

3.8 Other than for routine matters, the Webmaster and Parish Clerk should keep other members of the Communications Committee fully informed of any significant activities they have conducted on the Website.

3.9 The Communications Committee is directly accountable to the Council as a whole, not to any individual Councillor or any other Council Committee. Outside of regular maintenance

matters the Webmaster or another Administrator should report to full Council on any issues arising relating to the Website.

3.10 Where the Webmaster or other Councillor Administrator has managed any section of the Website in a manner contrary to the will of the Council, the Council may require them to make good any deficiencies, or in extreme cases, pass a motion of “No Confidence” and relieve them of their role on the Website. In that case, the Parish Clerk should remove them as an active Administrator thereby blocking their access to the Website management programme.

3.11 If there is temporarily no Webmaster, (e.g. after an election if the previous Webmaster is not re-elected), the Parish Clerk shall update the Website in a caretaker role until such time as a new Webmaster is elected.

3.12 Where the Parish Clerk has managed any section of the Website in a manner contrary to the will of the Council, the Council may require them to make good any deficiencies. As the Parish Clerk has a legal responsibility for the upkeep of certain information on the website (see section 2.2) it is not possible for Council to remove access and relieve them of their role on the Website.

3.13 If there is temporarily no Parish Clerk, (e.g. should there be a gap between a Parish Clerk resigning and a replacement being employed), the Webmaster shall update the Website in a caretaker role until such time as a new Parish Clerk is found. During any short term absence of the Parish Clerk (e.g. because of illness or holidays) the Webmaster should only make changes to the sections normally managed by the Parish Clerk where they are urgently required.

#### **4. Procedure for adding new material to the Website and removing out of date content.**

4.1 The main function of the Administrators is to manage the Website by adding or deleting material, and editing pages as required. As long as they enjoy the confidence of the Council, Administrators shall be empowered to make routine updates to the Website as they see fit without prior reference to Council, subject to other relevant sections of this Policy document. Examples of routine updates would include the following:

- Adding news items to the home page and on sub-pages.
- Correcting errors of spelling, syntax or grammar and factual errors.
- Repairing and restoring links that have ceased to work properly or adding appropriate new links relevant to the content.
- Routine structural changes where this improves the organisation of the Website and makes it more user-friendly (e.g. re-ordering content on a page, combining content from two or more pages onto one page, splitting content from a single page into two or more pages).
- Replacing out of date documents with current versions, or adding new documents whilst retaining older records (e.g. agendas, minutes, annual accounts).

- Maintaining up to date information with swift removal of out of date content (e.g. adding details of new Council and community events, relevant news and information, and deleting old information once dates have passed).

4.2 Preservation of Archival Material It is understood that Archival Material (as in “Definitions” section above) should be preserved without change to the content, but can be reorganised or re-structured as required. Section 2.2 above lists those items which must be retained because of legislative requirements but Council may also have separately agreed requirements for the retention of other specific records (e.g. the agenda and minutes from specific Council and Committee meetings). The Administrators must adhere to all of these requirements.

4.3 For pages on the Website that are linked to a particular Committee the expectation is that the content will primarily be produced by that Committee and then submitted to the Webmaster for placing on the Website. It is also primarily the responsibility of the Committees to identify any out of date content to be removed from the Website. Regular discussion of Website content should occur regularly at Committee meetings (at least four times per year for the Planning Committee and two times per year for other Committees) and decisions on major changes to content preferably agreed at those meetings. At times urgent changes will need to be agreed by e-mail outside of Committee meetings. In all cases the normal procedure would be for the Committee Chairman to gain agreement from fellow Committee members on proposed detailed content changes and then submit those changes to the Webmaster.

4.4 Additional content may also be agreed at full Council meetings, either in detail, or in principle leaving the detail to be established by the Administrators.

4.5 Providing that it is consistent with the general policies for content listed in section 2 any individual Councillor may submit other additional material for inclusion on the website.

4.6 Administrators are empowered to edit or exclude any material at their discretion however it would normally be expected that they discuss any proposed significant changes to submitted material with the person submitting it in order to agree an amended version. Where the matter cannot be resolved by those means then the matter can be referred to full Council for discussion, either by Administrators or by the person submitting the content.

#### **Appendix 1: Website pages managed by the Parish Clerk.**

- All pages and sub-pages under the About section other than the Key Objectives and Your Parish pages and any sub-pages of those pages.
- All pages and sub-pages under the Meetings, Agenda and Minutes section

#### **Appendix 2: Website pages managed by the Webmaster & other Councillor Administrators.**

- Home page
- All pages and sub-pages under the News section
- All pages and sub-pages under the Covid 19 hub section

- Under the About section, the Key Objectives and Your Parish pages and any sub-pages of those pages
- All pages and sub-pages under the Councillors section
- All pages and sub-pages under the Committees section
- All pages and sub-pages under the Public Spaces / Facilities section
- Any other additional pages not specifically allocated as a responsibility of the Clerk