



Ashchurch Rural Parish Council

Website Policy

Last reviewed on 21 August 2023

Next review due in August 2024 or sooner if required

Introduction

This policy covers the management of the Ashchurch Rural Parish Council website and should be read alongside the Parish Council's Communications Policy.

Website hosting arrangements

The Parish Council is committed to operating a website hosted by a third-party provider, having no other connection with the Ashchurch Rural Parish Council. The present host is OneSuffolk. The current system is a "content management system" where the Parish Council itself has direct control of day-to-day editing and text updating; security, maintenance and updating of the system itself is carried out by OneSuffolk.

Who determines what should be on the website?

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

What the website should contain

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

The Website may also contain other material, such as reports and information from Tewkesbury Borough Council and Gloucestershire County Council, history and geography of the Parish, news of local events, or any other material of a non-controversial nature which is appropriate for the Website on a "custom and practice" basis. The Website may also possess interactive functionality, customary for such local authority websites, (such as questionnaires, visitor response facilities, links to other sites etc.). The footprint of the Website may change from time to time according to requirements and circumstances, subject to approval by the Parish Council for significant changes.

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 Parish Council as a whole. Parish 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 the Parish Council may approve material for inclusion on the Website that not everybody necessarily agrees with.

Regardless of what has been voted on by the Parish 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 Parish Council to legal challenge.

The Webmaster

The Webmaster is appointed by the Parish Council, who retains overall control. The day-to-day working of the Website is subject to the control of the Webmaster who is empowered, by the Parish Council, to make routine updates to the Website. The function of the Webmaster is to manage the Website, adding or deleting material, and editing pages as required. The Webmaster shall be empowered to update the Website as is fit without prior reference to the Parish Council.

Other than for totally routine matters, (like uploading minutes), the Webmaster should keep the Parish Council informed of activities they may have conducted on the Website.

The Webmaster may ask for professional help as necessary, subject to reasonable cost limits and prior agreement with the Parish Council. Such expenditure should normally be planned and budgeted for the year ahead.

The Webmaster is accountable to the Parish Council as a whole, not to any individual Councillor.

Where the Webmaster has managed the Website in a manner contrary to the will of the Parish Council, the Parish Council may require the Webmaster to make good any deficiencies.

The Webmaster is not responsible for the outcome of any hacking or sabotage of the website.

Procedure for adding new material to the website

Any Councillor may submit material for inclusion on the website PROVIDED THAT it is consistent with this Policy, and also falls within any limits of technical feasibility to upload.

Advertising on the website

The Parish Council does not permit commercial advertising on the Website.

Cookies

Please refer to the Parish Council's "Cookie Policy".

Website accessibility

It is the Parish Council's intent to meet the requirements of the "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1 AA". For further details please refer to the Parish Council's "Accessibility statement".

Authority delegated to the Webmaster

Routine updates:

The Webmaster may make routine updates to the Website without prior reference to the Parish Council.

Examples of routine updates could be:

- Maintaining dates of forthcoming meetings
- Correcting errors of spelling, syntax or grammar and factual errors
- Repairing and restoring links that have ceased to work properly
- Replacing out of date documents with current versions
- Routine structural changes where this improves the organisation of the Website

Responding to requests to upload material

The Webmaster is empowered to edit or exclude any material submitted for uploading to the Website, without explanation to any Councillor or to the person submitting the material. Nevertheless, it would be normal for the Webmaster to attempt to explain outright refusal to upload or major editing actions, and, in order to retain the confidence of the Parish Council, the Webmaster must be prepared to answer for their actions in a full Parish Council meeting.

Preservation of Archival Material

It is understood that Archival Material should be preserved without change to the content, but can be reorganised or re-structured as required. If the Webmaster considers other “Non-Archival” material to be out of date and no longer relevant, such as advertising an event that no longer takes place, they may consider it for deletion. If the deletions are substantial, it would be advisable to check with Councillors prior to making significant deletions or significant changes to existing material, for example, by creating an “update plan” that the Parish Council can approve.

Webmaster uploading material

The Webmaster may upload material to the Website subject to the provisions of this policy. However, the Webmaster should be prepared to answer for their actions to the Parish Council and be prepared to delete the material should the Parish Council pass a motion to that effect. Where it is anticipated that there might be disagreement, it is advisable for the Webmaster to obtain the prior approval of the Parish Council.

Resolution of Disputes

If there is a dispute about the Webmaster’s decisions or activities, the Parish Council shall adjudicate and whose majority vote shall be considered final.

Timeframe for document uploads

The Webmaster will make all efforts to upload changes to the website within one working week.

Website editing access

A username and password are required to obtain legitimate access to the website’s editing functions. Each user granted access should have a unique username/password. Currently these roles have access:

- Webmaster
- Clerk

It is the responsibility of the holder to keep these details secret. The codes are managed by the Webmaster.

Website limits

The Parish Council will make every effort to keep file sizes to a minimum although in some cases this may be controlled by an outside source. The Parish Council will endeavor to use the most open and accessible file formats where possible.

Analytics

The Parish Council reserves the right to use services such as, but not limited to, Google Analytics to provide information to the Council to enable them to optimise the website for future best use.

Back Up

The backing up of the website is the responsibility of OneSuffolk and is performed daily.