

Media policy

POLICY REVIEW	
Signed	<i>(having been approved by the council)</i>
Minute reference	138/20/21 FEB
Date ratified	8 th February 2021
Date of next review	8 th February 2022

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy details how Theale Parish Council and its members will use media to improve and expand the ways in which it communicates with its local residents, organisations and partner agencies such as West Berkshire Council, the police, the local library and public health bodies.
- 1.2 For the purposes of this policy, media is defined as any means of ‘mass communication’ (*OED*, “media, n.2”). For the council, this encompasses:
 - a the parish council website
 - b noticeboards
 - c Facebook and Twitter
 - d Microsoft Teams
 - e YouTube
 - f any other social media platforms which the council may wish to use in the future.
- 1.3 Policy specific to the above platforms can be found in sections 5 to 9 below.

2 Code of practice

- 2.1 Communications to and from the council shall:
 - a be civil, tasteful and relevant
 - b not contain content that is knowingly unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive
 - c not contain content knowingly copied from elsewhere, for which we do not own the copyright
 - d not contain any personal information unless legally obliged and
 - e not be used for the dissemination of any political or commercial advertising.

- 2.2 The council will not tolerate any of the following communication:
- a obscene or racist statements
 - b personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
 - c potentially libellous statements
 - d plagiarised material; any material in violation of any laws, including copyright
 - e private, personal information published without consent
 - f commercial promotions or spam
 - g that which alleges a breach of a council's policy or the law.
- 2.3 The council's website shall be the primary method of promulgating information to the public. Where possible, posts or tweets by the council on Facebook or Twitter shall link to the council's website.
- 2.4 Email, telephone and post shall remain the official channels for the public to contact the council (ie the parish office). Facebook and Twitter posts, messages and tweets will not be considered an official communication. The council will not be obliged to monitor and respond to communications through these channels.

3 Responsibilities

- 3.1 The clerk shall be responsible for maintaining and administrating all the council's media platforms (see 1.2 above). Requests for publication on these platforms shall be directed to the clerk.
- 3.2 [?The council may designate a councillor to monitor the council's Facebook and Twitter accounts.]
- 3.3 The clerk shall retain the right to remove content from the council's Facebook, Twitter or YouTube accounts as described in 2.2 above.

4 Councillors' social media accounts

- 4.1 Councillors shall not use their own personal social media accounts when posting or commenting on posts about parish council business or anything that may-be construed as such.
- 4.2 Councillors using their own social media accounts or any other form of communication for community or other purposes do so as private individuals and should not use any privileged material gained from their position as a parish councillor.

5 Council website (www.thealeparishcouncil.gov.uk)

- 5.1 As the primary method of representing the council, the public shall be directed to the website for information from the council.
- 5.2 The website shall include:
- a agendas and minutes of council meetings
 - b council documents such as approved policies and financial statements
 - c news of council decisions and events and relevant posts from West Berkshire Council
 - d information on hiring council facilities

- e information on local organisations and
- f contact information for the parish office.

6 Noticeboards

- 6.1 The council's noticeboards (on the Hight Street and outside the parish office) shall be used for publishing council documents such as agendas of upcoming meetings and the notice of the public's right of inspection of the council's accounts.
- 6.2 The council may display posters advertising council events and activities, vacancies within the council and other information deemed relevant.
- 6.3 Local organisations may be permitted to display posters on the High Street noticeboard at the discretion of the clerk, who will be responsible for maintaining the display. The clerk retains the right to remove posters as s/he sees fit.

7 Facebook and Twitter

- 7.1 Facebook and Twitter may be used to:
 - a publicise meeting agendas and minutes
 - b advertise council events and activities
 - c advertise vacancies within the council
 - d share or retweet information from partner agencies such as West Berkshire Council, the police, the local library and public health bodies and
 - e distribute any other news which will benefit Theale residents.
- 7.2 Facebook and Twitter posts will, where possible, link to the council's website (see 2.3 above).
- 7.3 The council shall not be obliged to respond to Facebook and Twitter posts, messages and tweets (see 2.4 above).

8 Microsoft Teams

- 8.1 The council may use Microsoft Teams to host virtual council meetings during the coronavirus pandemic or other event which precludes face-to-face meeting. The clerk will publicise this on the agenda.
- 8.2 Members of the public wishing to attend virtually shall be able to obtain the link by contacting the clerk.

9 YouTube

- 9.1 The council may upload meeting recordings to its YouTube channel. Videos will then be embedded into the relevant page on the council's website.