

East Worlington Parish Council

East Worlington Parish Council Website Policy and Protocols

This Policy was adopted on the 30/7/2019

A. Policy statement

- i. We believe in undertaking our business in a transparent and open way and ensuring the people we represent and serve are clear about our decisions and actions. In support of this ambition our Parish Council website is designed to achieve effective information sharing and communication with our Parish Community.

B. Aims of the Parish Council Website

- i. To provide information about the Parish Council and its work.
- ii. To support engagement of residents of the Parish with the Parish Council – including providing contact details for members of the Parish to raise concerns or questions with the Parish Council, and providing a mechanism to facilitate surveys and/or consultations where appropriate.
- iii. To encourage usage of the website as a method of communication between the Parish Council and Parishioners.
- iv. To assist visibility of Parish Council matters to residents of the Parish, including agendas, minutes, directory of council members, and any other relevant Parish Council documents.
- v. To achieve transparency and greater public accountability.

C. Principles

- i. The following principle apply to our website:
 - a. Transparency
 - b. Timeliness
 - c. Accuracy
 - d. Honesty
 - e. Clarity
 - f. Plain English
 - g. No bias or opinions

D. Parish Website Policy and Disclaimers

- i. East Worlington Parish Council website is to be used for the business of the Parish Council only.
- ii. East Worlington Parish Council strives to maintain the information content of this web site to be correct, complete and accurate, however, no warranties, either express or implied, are given to that effect.
- iii. East Worlington Parish Council does not accept liability for any claim, loss or damage, whether direct, indirect or consequential, for any errors or omissions in the information or from the use of the information on this site or accessed through this site.
- iv. Our web site uses links to other web sites. East Worlington Parish Council assumes no responsibility whatsoever for the content of any Web pages linked to this site.
- v. Information on this Web site is subject to change without notice.

E. Managing and Administering the Parish Council Website

The Webmaster

- i. The 'Webmaster' is a term used to define the role of a person or persons with a designated responsibility to manage and administer the website. There may be more than one Webmaster. For East Worlington Parish Council we strive to ensure there is one Webmaster.
- ii. It is highly desirable that a Councillor volunteers to be the Webmaster and that this Councillor enjoys the confidence of the Council, in an explicit motion.
- iii. If it is not possible to appoint a Parish Councillor as Webmaster the Parish Council should appoint another person who they trust as Webmaster for the website. Council may appoint a non-councillor external consultant to operate as Webmaster, provided that the external consultant has no conflicting interest nor is part of any identifiable pressure group or political party where those activities and interests might be relevant to the business of the Council.

Parish Clerk

- i. The Parish Clerk has a key role in managing and administering the website. The Parish Clerk provides information and documents to ensure the website achieves accuracy, transparency and clarity and is maintained with relevant and current information.
- ii. To support effective and efficient working there must be clarity about the specific responsibilities to the Webmaster and the Parish Clerk, (as outlined below).

F. Webmaster Accountability

- i. The Webmaster is accountable to the whole Parish Council, not one Councillor, through reports at each scheduled Parish Council meeting.
- ii. The function of the Webmaster is to manage the Website, adding or deleting material, and editing pages as required. As long as the Webmaster enjoys the confidence of the Council, that person shall be empowered to update information and communication on the Website (in line with these protocols, especially section H) without prior reference to Council.
- iii. Other than for totally routine matters, (like uploading minutes), the Webmaster should keep Parish Councillors informed of activities that person has conducted in updating the Website.
- iv. If the Webmaster is unable or unwilling to implement a decision or wish of the Council, the Council may engage further help to execute its wishes as necessary, without otherwise prejudicing the role of the Webmaster.
- v. Where the Webmaster has managed the Website in a manner contrary to the will of the Council, the Council may require the Webmaster to make good any deficiencies, or in extreme cases, pass a motion of "No Confidence" in the Webmaster and relieve him of his role on the Website. In that case, the Parish Clerk should take back control of the Website password and block any further activities by the Webmaster.
- vi. In these circumstances it will be highly desirable for a replacement Webmaster to be appointed. Failing this it will be necessary for the Parish Clerk to take over control of the entire Website subject to approval by Council.
- vii. If there is 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 within the time that he has available until such time as a new Webmaster can be found.

G. Appointment, Retention and Resignation of the Webmasters

- i. The Webmaster is appointed by the full Council at an AGM or other scheduled meeting as necessary.
- ii. When the Webmaster is a Councillor who volunteers the Council will confirm the appointment in the minutes of the meeting.
- iii. The Webmaster will be an annual appointment with reappointment confirmed at each AGM.
- iv. The Webmaster can resign at any time from the responsibility and this does not affect the person's role as a Parish Councillor.
- v. To ensure the Parish Council can maintain its website it will be helpful if any resignation is notified well ahead of the actual date of resignation to enable the Parish Council to appoint a new Webmaster.

H. Procedure for changing the website page structure and adding new material to the Website

Page structure

- i. When the Parish Council adopt the website they are agreeing to structure of the site. From time to time it may be necessary to add or remove pages from the site. Sometimes this has to be done in a short timescale.
- ii. If the timescale allows for a change to be made following the next available Parish Council Meeting the change should be approved by the Council at that meeting.
- iii. If the change has to be dealt with in a short timescale the Webmaster should inform the Chair of the Parish Council of the need for a change and the two of them should have delegated powers to enact that change, providing the change is brought to the next Parish Council meeting for ratification.
- iv. If the Webmaster is the Chair the Vice-chair should act as the second Councillor in respect of making decisions about website changes.

Routine Content and Document Updates

- i. The Webmaster may make routine updates to the Website without prior reference to Council or other Councillors. Examples of routine updates could be:
 - a. Correcting errors of spelling, syntax or grammar and factual errors.
 - b. Repairing and restoring links that have ceased to work properly.
 - c. Routine structural changes where this improves the organisation of the Website.
 - d. Replacing out of date documents with current versions.
- ii. The Webmaster may upload agendas, minutes, reports and other documents provided by the Parish Council Clerk

Major Changes to Website Content

- i. This refers to significant changes to the content on webpages.
- ii. When the Webmaster is aware of, or made aware of by other Councillors or the Clerk, on the need to make significant content changes to any of the website pages the Webmaster will clarify the new content with the Chair of the Parish Council and make any changes agreed.
- iii. If the Chair of the Parish Council is the Webmaster the vice-chair should act as the second Councillor in respect of making decisions about the content changes.

Responding to Requests to Upload Material

From Councillors

- i. Any Councillor and the Clerk may submit material for inclusion on the website provided that it is consistent with the aims and principles outlined in this policy.
- ii. So long as the Webmaster enjoys the confidence of the Council, that person is empowered to edit or exclude any material submitted for uploading to the Website. It would be normal for the Webmaster to explain to the Councillor the reason for edit or exclusion. The Webmaster's decision is final in such matters. The Webmaster must be prepared to answer for his actions in a full Council meeting, in order to retain the confidence of the Council.

From other people and organisations

- i. It is not normal practice to upload information or materials requested by other people or organisations. However there may be occasions when there is a case to add such information or materials. (e.g. relevant conferences, workshops or materials to the benefit of the Parish Council business and the community).
- ii. Normally the Clerk would receive such requests and the Webmaster and Clerk can decide if such information or materials can be added. If there is any uncertainty by the Webmaster and Clerk about the information or materials should be sent to the Chair of the Parish Councillor for an opinion.
- iii. If any Councillor receives such requests it should be passed to the Clerk and the procedure in (ii) above followed.

Preservation of Archival Material

- i. Archival Material should be preserved without change to the content (e.g. minutes), but can be reorganised or re-structured as required.
- ii. If the Webmaster considers other "Non-Archival" material to be out of date and no longer relevant, that person may consider it for deletion. If the deletions are substantial, the Webmaster will check with Councillors and/or the Clerk prior to making significant deletions or significant changes to existing material.

Resolution of Disputes

- i. If there is a dispute about the Webmaster's decisions or activities, the Chair shall adjudicate in the first instance, and if this fails to provide a resolution, the matter shall be referred to full Council whose majority vote shall be considered final.

I. Allocation of tasks between the Webmaster and the Parish Clerk

Parish Clerk

- i. The Parish Clerk should provide information in the follows aspects:
 - a. Parish Councillor Contact Details and Profiles
 - b. Council Business
 - c. Council Events/Diary
 - d. Agendas and Minutes
 - e. (Note: Only the agendas and minutes of Full Council or Planning Committee are uploaded. It is not the current Website Policy to upload the agendas and minutes of the other Committees)
 - f. Notice of Annual Parish Meeting
 - g. Notice of Council Elections
 - h. Parish and Parish Council Newsletters
 - i. Parish Council Newsletter articles
 - j. Information about County and District Councillors
 - k. Useful contacts information, e.g. police, etc.
 - l. Information about Committees
 - m. How to contact the Council
 - n. Information about the process and protocols to address the Council
 - o. Policies / Reports
 - p. Freedom of Information
 - q. Accounts / Budgets
 - r. Notice of Elections / casual vacancies
 - s. Highways / local issues
 - t. Planning
 - u. Information about Grants
 - v. Information about other websites that support the Parish and work of the Parish Council.

The Webmaster

- i. The Webmaster will:
 - a. Upload information provided by the Parish Clerk
 - b. Maintain the pages of the website to achieve information and communication accuracy, clarity and transparency
 - c. Upload and refresh photographs provided by Councillor and Parishioners
 - d. Ensure Parish Councillors information is on the website (including Photographs as appropriate)
 - e. Maintain the Parish Plan Page
 - f. Maintain the Emergency Plan Page
 - g. Maintain and update as appropriate Useful Links
 - h. Upload Surveys/Reports
 - i. Upload and maintain useful contacts details

J. Webmaster working relationship with Parish Clerk

- i. The Webmaster and the Parish Clerk should operate co-operatively on the management of the Website. The Parish Clerk or the Webmaster may from time to time request help from each other to ensure the Website is properly maintained. The working relationship between the Webmaster and Parish Clerk should be a strong and constructive one, however 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.

K. Quality Assurance

- i. It is the responsibility of each Parish Councillor if he or she identifies an error or inaccurate information on the website to notify the Webmaster and Parish Clerk immediately.
- ii. The Webmaster will monitor the website quarterly to ensure the website information is up-to-date and the quality of accuracy, clarity and transparency are maintained.