



The Parish Centre, 50 Gerald's Way
Chalford, Stroud, GL6 8FJ

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY

The use of digital and social media and electronic communication enables Chalford Parish Council (the Council) to interact in a way that improves the communications both within the Council and between the Council residents, businesses and agencies it works with and serves.

The Council has a website (www.chalford-glos.gov.uk), has administration access to the Parish Council Facebook page and uses email to communicate.

The Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications. Over time the Council may add to the channels of communication that it uses as it seeks to improve and expand the services it delivers. When these changes occur, this policy will be updated to reflect the new arrangements.

Parish Council Website

The Council's website provides details of the services and activities of the Council and information about the Parish. Contact details for Councillors, dates of meetings, agendas and minutes of meetings can all be found on the website.

Where necessary, Council staff may direct those contacting the Council to the Parish Council website to see the required information. Alternatively, with permission, they may forward the question to one of the Parish Councillors for consideration and response. Council staff may not respond to every comment received particularly if they are experiencing a heavy workload.

Parish Council Facebook Page

The Council's Facebook page is available to provide information and updates regarding activities and opportunities within the Parish, and to promote our community positively.

Communications from the Council will meet the following criteria:

- Be civil, tasteful and relevant;
- Not contain content that is knowingly unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive;
- Not contain content knowingly copied from elsewhere, for which we do not own the copyright;

- Not contain any personal information;
- If it is official Council business, it will be moderated by either the Clerk to the Council or nominated Parish Councillor(s);
- Not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising.

To ensure that all discussions on the Council's Facebook page are productive, respectful, and consistent with the Council's aims and objectives, we ask residents to follow these guidelines:

- Be considerate and respectful of others – vulgarity, threats or abuse of language will not be tolerated;
- Differing opinions and discussion of diverse ideas are encouraged, but personal attacks on anyone, including the Council members or staff, will not be permitted;
- Share freely and be generous with official Council posts, but be aware of copyright laws, be accurate and give credit where credit is due;
- Stay on topic;
- Refrain from using the Council's Facebook page for commercial purposes or to advertise market or sell products.

The site is not monitored 24 hours a day and we will not reply to any messages or comments received. However, Council staff will endeavour to ensure that any emerging themes or helpful suggestions are passed to the relevant people or authorities. Please do not include personal/private information in your social media posts to the Council.

Sending a message or posting via Facebook will not be considered as contacting the Council for official purposes and the staff will not be obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through these channels. Instead, please make direct contact with the Parish Council Clerk, Deputy Clerk or Assistant Clerk by sending an email to (info@chalford-glos.gov.uk) or by letter, or visiting the Parish Centre.

Council staff retain the right to remove comments or content that includes:

- Obscene, prejudiced or racist content;
- Personal attacks, insults or threatening language;
- Potentially libellous or defamatory statements;
- Plagiarized material, any material in violation of any laws, including copyright;
- Private, personal information published without consent;
- Information or links unrelated to the content of the forum
- Commercial promotions or spam
- Allegations of a breach of the Council's policy or the law;

The Council's response to any communication received not meeting the above criteria will be to either ignore, inform the sender of our policy or send a brief response as appropriate. This will be at the Council's discretion based on the message received, given our limited resources available.

Any information posted on social media not in line with the above criteria will be removed as quickly as practically possible. Repeat offenders will be blocked. The Council may post a statement that 'A post breaching the Parish Council's Social Media Policy has been removed'. If the post alleges a breach of the Parish Council's policy or the law, the person

who posted it will be asked to submit a formal complaint to the Council or report the matter to the Police as soon as possible to allow due process.

Parish Council Email

The Clerk to the Parish Council has a specific email address (kate@chalford-glos.gov.uk). The email account is monitored mainly during office hours, Monday to Thursday, and the Clerk aims to reply as soon as practicable.

The Clerk is responsible for dealing with email received and passing on any relevant mail to Councillors or external agencies for information and/or action. All communications on behalf of the Council will usually come from the Clerk, and/or otherwise will always be copied to the Clerk.

Individual Councillors are at liberty to communicate directly with parishioners in relation to their own personal views, if appropriate, copying the Clerk. Any emails sent to the Clerk or Councillors in their official capacity will be subject to The Freedom of Information Act 2018. These procedures will ensure that a complete and proper record of all correspondence is kept.

Please do not forward personal information on to other people or groups outside of the Council; this includes names, addresses, email, IP addresses and cookie identifiers.

Internal communication and access to information within the Council

The Council is continually looking at ways to improve its methods of working. The use of social media and electronic communication is a major factor in delivering improvement.

Councillors are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct and the Data Protection Act in all their work on behalf of the Council.

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Approving committee: Finance & Management Committee

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Supersedes:

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