

Bovingdon Parish Council

Parish Council Office
Memorial Hall
High Street
Bovingdon
Herts HP3 0HJ

Tel: 01442 833036
Email: office@bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk
Website: www.bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk



Social Media and Communications Policy

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Communications from the Council
3. Publication of online content
4. Facebook communications
5. Website communications
6. Email communications
7. Other Social Media Platforms (What's App/Instagram etc.)
8. Parish Council Communications Working Group

Bovingdon Parish Council

Parish Council Office
Memorial Hall
High Street
Bovingdon
Herts HP3 0HJ

Tel: 01442 833036
Email: office@bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk
Website: www.bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk



1. Introduction

The Council has a website and 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.

The Council Facebook page intends to provide information and updates regarding activities and opportunities within our Parish and promote our community positively. The use of digital and social media and electronic communication enables the Parish Council to interact in a way that improves the communications both within the Council and between the Council and the people, businesses, and agencies it works with and serves.

2. Communications from the Council

The Council is committed to continually improving its operations, with social media and electronic communication playing a key role in supporting these improvements. When communicating on behalf of the Council, all Councillors must comply with the Code of Conduct, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Councillors are required to maintain strict confidentiality regarding any information they access in their official capacity. Confidential or sensitive information must not be shared or disclosed to unauthorised individuals under any circumstances. Failure to uphold confidentiality may constitute a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct and will be addressed in accordance with the Council's established procedures. In serious cases, such breaches may also lead to criminal investigation under relevant legislation.

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

Bovingdon Parish Council

Parish Council Office
Memorial Hall
High Street
Bovingdon
Herts HP3 0HJ

Tel: 01442 833036
Email: office@bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk
Website: www.bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk



- If it is official Council business, it will be moderated by the Parish Clerk and /or the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Council
- Social media will not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising.

Any information posted on the Council's Facebook page, in response to a Council post, that does not comply with the criteria outlined above will be removed as soon as reasonably practicable. Repeat offenders may be blocked from accessing or commenting on the page.

If a post contains an allegation of a breach of Council policy or of the law, the individual responsible will be asked to submit a formal complaint to the Council or report the matter directly to the Police to ensure proper due process.

Please note that the Facebook page is not monitored 24/7, and while we may not be able to respond individually to every message or comment, we will endeavour to ensure that any emerging themes, issues, or helpful suggestions are passed to the relevant person or authority.

Users are reminded not to include personal or private information in any posts or messages. Communication via Facebook will not be regarded as official contact with the Parish Council, and we are under no obligation to monitor or respond to requests for information through this channel. For official correspondence, please contact the Parish Clerk directly at office@bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk.

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

- Obscene, offensive, or racist material.
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening or abusive language.
- Potentially libellous, slanderous, or defamatory statements.
- Plagiarised content or any material that infringes legal rights, including copyright or intellectual property laws.
- Private or personal information published without the explicit consent of the individual concerned.
- Information, links, or material that are irrelevant to the subject or purpose of the forum.
- Commercial promotions, advertising, or unsolicited messages (spam).
- Allegations of breaches of Council policies or the law, which should instead be reported through the Council's official procedures.

Bovingdon Parish Council

Parish Council Office
Memorial Hall
High Street
Bovingdon
Herts HP3 0HJ

Tel: 01442 833036
Email: office@bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk
Website: www.bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk



3. Publication of Online Content

Responsibility for approving and publishing content on the Council's website and Facebook page rests solely with the Parish Clerk.

From time to time, requests for information may be referred to a Councillor for their consideration and input. Any response provided will be channelled through the Parish Clerk for final approval and publication.

4. Facebook Communications

The Parish Council recognises Facebook as a valuable tool for enhancing communication, transparency, and engagement with the local community.

The Council's official Facebook page will be used to share accurate and timely information about Council meetings, community events, public notices, and initiatives of local interest. Its purpose is to foster constructive dialogue and strengthen relationships between the Council and parish residents.

All content will be managed by the Parish Clerk in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, Data Protection obligations, and social media guidelines. The page will not be used for political purposes, personal opinions, or discussions that could bring the Council into disrepute. Comments and interactions will be moderated to ensure that communication remains respectful, relevant, and in keeping with the Council's values and policies.

- The Parish Clerk reserves the right to remove any content deemed to be in breach of the Council's communication and conduct criteria.
- The Council's Facebook page is intended to promote community engagement, interaction, and the sharing of information relevant to the parish.
- No politically motivated content or posts will be published by the Council.
- The page will be administered using the Parish Clerk's official email address only.
- Photos may be publicly accessible; however, no identifiable images of children (showing a clear view of their face) will be displayed without the prior written consent of a parent or guardian.
- Individuals who 'like' the Council's Facebook page will not be able to post content directly, but they may comment on posts created by the Council, subject to moderation and compliance with the Council's communication standards.

Bovingdon Parish Council

Parish Council Office
Memorial Hall
High Street
Bovingdon
Herts HP3 0HJ

Tel: 01442 833036
Email: office@bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk
Website: www.bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk



5. Website Communications

The Council's website forms an essential part of its communication and engagement strategy. Its primary purpose is to provide clear, accurate, and accessible information to residents, local clubs, societies, community organisations, and external bodies, including other Councils and local or central government organisations.

The Council will endeavour to ensure that all content published on the website is relevant, accurate, and kept up to date. Members of the public may, on occasion, be directed to the website to access information or resources relevant to their enquiries.

The website may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Information relating to village clubs, societies, organisations, and community events.
- Links to relevant external websites i.e. Dacorum Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council.
- Parish Council agendas.
- Parish Council minutes.
- Parish Council committee minutes.
- Parish Council financial information, as permitted under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (as amended).
- Parish Council policies and procedures.
- Information about Parish Councillors, including contact details and roles.

Additional items may be included at the Parish Clerk's discretion. Any requests for publication on the website should be submitted via email to the Parish Clerk at office@bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk

The following content will not be published on the Council's website:

- Articles affiliated with or promoting any political organisation.
- Commercial advertisements.
- Publicity for non-charitable fundraising events.

6. Email Communications

The Council maintains a single general email address, monitored during office hours as specified on the Council's website. While responses will be made as promptly as possible, the office operates on a part-time basis, Monday to Friday, and response times may vary depending on workload.

Bovingdon Parish Council

Parish Council Office
Memorial Hall
High Street
Bovingdon
Herts HP3 0HJ



Tel: 01442 833036

Email: office@bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk

- The Parish Clerk is responsible for managing all emails received at the Council address and may respond directly or forward correspondence to the relevant Councillor or external agency as appropriate.
- All official communications on behalf of the Council must originate from the Parish Clerk or be copied to the Parish Clerk.
- Emails sent to the Parish Clerk or Councillors in their official capacity are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (as amended). This policy ensures that a comprehensive and accurate record of all correspondence is maintained.
- Councillors will be provided with official .gov.uk email addresses. This policy applies fully to these addresses.
- Official business, including delivery of summons for Bovingdon Parish Council meetings, will be conducted through these official email addresses.
- If Councillors receive official Council correspondence on any non-official email account, they must forward it to their official Parish Council email and notify the sender accordingly. **All official responses must be sent from the official email address.**
- The Council's use of electronic communication complies with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as detailed in the Council's GDPR policies. Emails containing personal data must not be forwarded outside the Council without the explicit consent of the original sender. This includes, but is not limited to, names, addresses, email addresses, IP addresses, and cookie identifiers.
- Councillors are encouraged to minimise unnecessary group emails, sending messages only to essential recipients and avoiding the 'Reply All' function where possible, while ensuring that all necessary parties are copied in and confidential information is appropriately handled.
- All outgoing emails will include the Council's standard signature and disclaimer as determined by the Parish Clerk as follows:

"The information in this message should be regarded as confidential and is intended for the addressee only unless explicitly stated. If you have received this message in error it must be deleted and the sender notified. The views expressed in this message are personal and not necessarily those of Bovingdon Parish Council unless explicitly stated. Please be aware that emails sent to or received from Bovingdon Parish Council may be intercepted and read by the council. Interception will only occur to ensure compliance with council policies or procedures or regulatory obligations, to prevent or deter crime, or for the purposes of essential maintenance or support of the email system.

Bovingdon Parish Council is the Data Controller under the new data protection law and will use the information you provide by email to contact you. The legal basis for processing this data is the necessity for compliance with our legal obligation. We will keep your data until there is no longer an administrative requirement following the resolution of your request. Your information will not be shared further.

Individuals have a number of rights under data protection law, including the right to request their information. You also have a right to make a complaint about our handling of your personal data to the Information Commissioner's Office <https://ico.org.uk/>. Information you provide will only be used for the stated purpose. Further information about the processing of your data can be found on our website at www.bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk. You can contact the Council's Data Protection Officer, Paul Russell, via the Parish Council Office or directly on 07772 657446 or via email paul@microshadevsm.co.uk."

Bovingdon Parish Council

Parish Council Office
Memorial Hall
High Street
Bovingdon
Herts HP3 0HJ

Tel: 01442 833036
Email: office@bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk
Website: www.bovingdonparishcouncil.gov.uk



7. Other Media Platforms (What's App/Instagram etc.)

The Parish Council does not currently use any other social media platforms for official Council communications. **Councillors are strongly discouraged from using alternative platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, or similar applications for conducting Parish Council business or for communicating with members of the public on Council matters.**

All official communication should take place through approved Parish Council channels to ensure transparency, data protection compliance, and the maintenance of accurate records.

8. Parish Council Communications Working Group

The Parish Council Communications Working Group is tasked with supporting the Council in enhancing communication and engagement with the community through various channels. While the group plays a key role in developing communication strategies, reviewing content, and advising on best practices, it must work in close consultation with the Parish Clerk. The Parish Clerk holds primary responsibility for the management and administration of all official communications and ensures that all messaging complies with the Council's policies, legal requirements, and operational protocols. This collaborative approach ensures consistency, accuracy, and compliance across all communication activities.