

## **Electronic Communication Policy**

**This Electronic Communication Policy  
was adopted by Mountfield Parish  
Council at their Annual Meeting  
on 8th May 2018**

# MOUNTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

The use of digital and electronic communication enables Mountfield 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.

Mountfield Parish Council has a website – [www.mountfield.org.uk](http://www.mountfield.org.uk) – 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.

## COMMUNICATIONS FROM MOUNTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL WILL MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA

- Be civil, tasteful and relevant.
- Not contain contents 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.
- Official Council business will be moderated by the Clerk to the Council.

In order to ensure that all discussions on the Council's website are productive, respectful and consistent with the Council's aims and objectives, we ask you 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.

We will not be able to monitor 24/7. However, we will endeavour to ensure that emerging themes or helpful suggestions are passed to the relevant authorities.

We retain the right to block any content that includes

- Obscene or racist content.
- Personal attacks, insults or threatening language.
- Potentially libellous statements.
- Plagiarised material; any material in violation of any laws, including copyright.
- Private, personal information published without consent.
- Alleges 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. If the post alleges a breach of the Council's policy or 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.

## MOUNTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE

Where necessary, we may direct those contacting us to our website to see the required information, or we may forward their question to one of our Councillors for consideration and response.

The Council may, at its discretion, allow approved local groups to have a presence on its website for the purpose of presenting information about the group's activities. The Council reserves the right to remove any or all of a local group's information from its website if it feels that the content does not meet the Council's "rules and expectation" for its website.

# MOUNTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

## MOUNTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL EMAIL

The Clerk to the Council has their own email address – [clerk@mountfield.org.uk](mailto:clerk@mountfield.org.uk)

The email account is monitored very frequently and we aim to reply to all questions sent as soon as we can.

The Clerk is responsible for dealing with email received and passing on any relevant email to member and external agencies for information and/or action. All communications on behalf of Mountfield Parish 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, copy to the Clerk. **NOTE:** any emails copied to the Clerk become official and will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

These procedures will ensure that a complete and proper record of all correspondence is kept.

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

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

**As more and more information becomes available at the press of a button, it is vital that all information is treated sensitively and securely. Councillors are expected to maintain an awareness of the confidentiality of information that they have access to and not to share confidential information with anyone. Failure to properly observe confidentiality may be seen as a breach of Mountfield Parish Council's Code of Conduct and will be dealt with through its prescribed procedures (at the extreme, it may also involve a criminal investigation).**

**Members should also be careful only to cc essential recipients on emails, i.e. to avoid the use of the "Reply to All" option if at all possible, but of course copying in all who need to know and ensuring that email trails have been removed.**