

## **POLICY: Use of Social Media and Electronic Communication**

**PURPOSE:** To provide guidance on appropriate use of Social Media and electronic Communication for sharing information by the Parish Council

**SCOPE:** Guidance for Parish Councillors and members of the public for appropriate use of Facebook

The use of digital and social media and electronic communication enables Melbourn Parish Council (MPC) 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.

MPC has a website, 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.

### **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 Chair/Vice Chair of the Council or the Clerk to the Council;
- Social media will not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising.

The Melbourn Parish Council Facebook pages intends to:

Provide information and updates regarding activities and opportunities within Melbourn Parish and promote positive thoughts and comments from residents within the parish. Only the Parish Clerk has access to the login for Facebook page and can post on the page. Members of the public and councillors can leave comments in agreed corporate

boundaries on parish matters, but members must follow the guidance outlined in this policy.

In order to ensure that all discussions on the Melbourn Parish Council Facebook page are productive, respectful, energized and consistent with the Council's mission and goals, 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 Melbourn Parish Council members or staff, will not be permitted.
- Share freely and be generous, but be aware of copyright laws; be accurate and give credit where credit is due.
- Stay on topic.
- Refrain from using the Facebook page for commercial purposes or to market products.

The sites are not monitored 24/7 and we will not always be able to reply individually to all messages or comments received. However, we will endeavour to ensure that any emerging themes or helpful suggestions are passed to the relevant people.

Sending a message/post via Facebook will not be considered as contacting the Council for official purposes and we will not be obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through the Facebook channel. Instead, please see our contact details on [www.melbournparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.melbournparishcouncil.co.uk). Please do not include personal/private information in your Facebook posts/messages to us.

We retain the right to remove comments or 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
- Information or links unrelated to the content of the forum
- Commercial promotions or spam
- Alleges a breach of a Council's policy or the law

### **Non-compliance will not be tolerated and can result in a ban**

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 the Facebook page not in line with the above criteria will be removed as quickly as practically possible. Repeat offenders may be blocked from the Facebook page. The Council may post a

statement that 'A post breaching the Council's Social Media Policy has been removed'. If the post alleges a breach of a Council 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 relevant authority as soon as possible to allow due process.

Melbourn Parish Council are not responsible for the accuracy of content posted by any subscriber in any forum and opinions expressed in comments on Melbourn Parish Council's social media forums do not necessarily represent those of Melbourn Parish Council.

All comments, once posted, become the property of Melbourn Parish Council and we reserve the right to reproduce, distribute, publish, display or edit. Derivative work can also be created from such postings or content, and used for any purpose, in any form and on any other media.

Melbourn Parish Council are not responsible, liable for and do not endorse the privacy practices of Facebook or any linked websites. Your use of Facebook and any linked websites is at your own risk.

Melbourn Parish Council assumes no responsibility or liability for any injury, loss or damage incurred as a result of any use or reliance upon the information and material contained within or downloaded from these websites.

Facebook may occasionally be unavailable and we accept no responsibility for this lack of service.

The presence of any advertisement on Facebook is not an endorsement of the authenticity or quality of the goods, services or website and Melbourn Parish Council will not be held responsible for any claims arising in that respect.

This comment policy may be revised at any time.

By choosing to comment and/or utilise any Melbourn Parish Council Social Media site, users are deemed to agree to this policy.



**Document Approval:**

**(Chair to Melbourn Parish Council)**

**Date of Parish Council Meeting: 28 November 2022**

*Document Review Policy: 2 years from last approval*

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