Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy

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.

The Council has a website 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 website intends to provide information and updates 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.

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. We may not respond to every comment we receive particularly if we are experiencing a heavy workload.

The Council may, at its discretion, allow and enable approved local groups to have and maintain a presence on its website for the purpose of presenting information about the group's activities. The local group would be responsible for maintaining the content and ensuring that it meets the Council's 'rules and expectations' for the website. The Council reserves the right to remove any or all of a local group's information from the website if it feels that the content does not meet the Council's 'rules and expectations' for its website. Where content on the website is maintained by a local group it should be marked that such content is not the direct responsibility of the Council.

Parish Council email

The Clerk to the council has the council email address: clerk@wimbotsham-pc.gov.uk
The email account is monitored on an ad hoc basis, Monday to Friday, and we aim to reply to all questions sent as soon as we can.

The Clerk is responsible for dealing with emails received and passing on any relevant mail to members 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. All new Emails requiring data to be passed on will be followed up with a Data consent form for completion before action is taken with that correspondence.

Date Adopted October 2026 Review Date October 2028

1 Individual Councillors are at liberty to communicate directly with parishioners in relation to their personal views and, if appropriate, copy to the Clerk. NB 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 to other people or groups outside of the Council; this includes names, addresses, email, IP addresses and cookie identifiers.

Video Conferencing e.g. Skype, Teams or Zoom
If this medium is used to communicate, please note that this policy also applies to the use of video conferencing.

Internal communication and access to information within the Council
The Council is continually looking at ways to improve its working and the use of social media and electronic communications 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
As more and more information becomes available at the press of a button, all information must be 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 the 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 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.