# Black Bourton Parish Council

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY

The use of digital and social media and electronic communication enables Black Bourton 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 (www. blackbourton.org.uk), a 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.

The Facebook page is available to provide information and updates regarding activities and opportunities within the 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;
- not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising.

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

Sending a message or posting 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 these channels. Instead, please make direct contact with the Council's Clerk (clerk@blackbourton.org.uk) and/or members of the council by sending an email or letter.

The Council's response to any communication received which is considered unacceptable will be to inform the sender of the Procedure to Manage Unacceptable Behaviour, or send a brief response as

appropriate. This will be at the Council's discretion based on the communication received, given our limited resources available.

**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.

**Parish Council email**

The Clerk to the Parish Council has a specific council email address – clerk@black bourton.org.uk

The email account is monitored during office hours, Monday to Friday, 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 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.

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.

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 working and 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.

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.

Adopted 1 October 2025
Reviewed July 2026