



Harlestone Parish Council

www.harlestonepc.org

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Harlestone Parish Council is committed to being respectful, helpful and conscientious when communicating to or with each other and to or with members of the public. This guidance is an aide-memoire to facilitate good practice. The guidance will be reviewed annually.

You should read the entire document. However, this quick summary should keep us all on track.

SUMMARY

Social Media Guidelines:

- i. Send items to the EO to post
- ii. Clearly state whether you are posting as council representative or personally
- iii. Be respectful, informative and accurate when posting

Filming & Recording

- i. HPC meetings may be filmed or recorded
- ii. If the filming/recording is distracting or disruptive the Chairman may halt the meeting
- iii. HPC may exclude members of the press or public under certain circumstances

Privacy Policy

- i. HPC holds data securely – contact information – for council representatives
- ii. The information will only be used or released for council related communication
- iii. Council representatives are asked not to circulate personal data

Complaints

- i. Contact the EO if you have any concerns or complaints

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

This guidance is for Harlestone Parish Councillors, its officers, committee members and other parties that have occasion to represent HPC when using social media. Its aim is to formalise a set of principles which reflect the values of the parish council and encourage professionalism – it is not intended to limit personal freedoms or use of social media.

This guidance covers all social media forums and social networking sites including (but not limited to):

- Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and other social networking sites
- Twitter and other micro blogging sites
- YouTube and other video clip and podcast sites
- Blogs and discussion forums

Social media does not replace existing forms of communication. For councillors, the current Code of Conduct applies to social media activity in the same way it does to other written or verbal communication. ~~Parish council representatives are advised to send 'posts' to the EO as he is the official voice of the council.~~ Social media may be used to:

- Distribute parish council agendas, post minutes and dates of meetings and to advertise parish councillor vacancies
- Announce new information from the parish council, promote links to news stories on the Harlestonepc.org website and to advertise parish council or community events/activities.
- Post or share information from stakeholder groups working in or for Harlestone parish or from other local authorities, for example DDC, the school or playing field association
- Refer queries to the EO or parish councillors

Good practice for parish councillors and council representatives

- Parish councillors' views posted in any capacity in advance of matters to be debated by the parish council at a council or committee meeting *may* be considered prejudicial and the individual must declare an interest at the council meeting.
- You should be clear about your identity and distinguish whether you are posting in an official capacity or not. It should be clear to the reader whether you are posting a personal opinion or communicating an official Parish Council view, policy or intended action.
- Do not misrepresent the democratic decisions of the Parish Council or denigrate the process by which the council made its decision. The council is committed to being open and transparent and having a clear decision making process. Complaints or constructive criticisms in this regard are taken seriously and should be sent to the EO.
- Online content should be accurate, objective, balanced and informative, the tone of any comments should be respectful and helpful.

- Parish council representatives are responsible for what they post if acting in an official capacity.

Harlestone Parish Council is committed to supporting a safe and inclusive online space which is informative and enhances our community. With this in mind council representatives must not:

- post online activity that constitutes bullying or harassment, engage in personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications
- publish untrue statements about a person which is damaging to their reputation as doing so is libellous and can result in a court action and a fine for damages
- use an individual's name unless given written permission to do so (this extends to council representatives and members of the public)
- publish photographs or videos of minors without parental permission
- publish or forward personal data, including personal email addresses, of individuals without permission as this is a breach of Data Protection legislation and is an offence.
- post offensive language or images relating to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age, religion or belief
- post copyrighted images or text on social media as it is an offence to do so. Breach of copyright will result in an award of damages against you.

In the main, parish council representatives have the same legal duties and rights online as anyone else, but failure to comply with the law may have more serious consequences. The guidance sits alongside the Councillor Code of Conduct, GDPR policies and Data Protection legislation and some is covered by other legislation and must be observed.

FILMING AND RECORDING

The Local Government Audit and Accountability Act 2014 came into force as of 6 August 2014.

Members of the public are permitted to film or record Parish Council meetings in a non-disruptive manner and only to the extent that it does not interfere with any person's ability, including where he or she has a disability, to follow the debate. This extends to digital and social media recording tools.

While those attending meetings are deemed to have consented to the filming, recording or broadcasting of meetings, those exercising the rights to film, record and broadcast must respect the rights of others people attending under the Data Protection Act 2018. This will include the particular rights of any children or vulnerable adults attending the meeting.

The Chairman of the meeting has the authority to stop a meeting and take appropriate action if any person is deemed to be recording in a disruptive manner.

The Parish Council may, at its or the EO's discretion, exclude the press and public from the parish council meetings if the subject under discussion is commercially sensitive or relates to a confidential staffing matter. Removal of the public does not compromise HPCs commitment to transparency.

Any person or organisation filming, recording or broadcasting a meeting of the Parish Council is responsible for any resulting claims or liabilities. The Parish Council asks those recording proceedings do not to edit the film or recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings, or infringe the core values of the council. This includes refraining from editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule, or show lack of respect towards those being filmed or recorded.

The Parish Council will display its filming, recording and broadcasting policy at its meeting venues and those undertaking these activities will be deemed to have accepted the policy whether they have read them or not. The Parish Council may itself photograph, film, record or broadcast at its meetings and can retain, use or dispose of such material in accordance with its retention and disposal policies.

PRIVACY NOTICE

This policy relates to Harlestone Parish Councillors, its officers, committee members and other parties that have occasion to work with Harlestone Parish Council on working parties or if involved in the organisation of parish events and relates to the data held for those persons. For the purpose of this policy these persons are referred to as 'partners'.

This notice is in line with the GDPR regulations and ICO guidance.

The data HPC holds includes:

- Contact information – email address, telephone numbers and home address as supplied to the Executive Officer (EO) on commencing work with the council.
- The EO is the data controller and should you wish to withdraw your consent to hold this information or amend it, instruction should be sent to the EO.
- The data controller keeps all information securely in accordance with the regulatory protocols
- All HPC partners are expected to respect and adhere to the principles of this privacy notice.

Information sharing policy:

- Email addresses are used for general communication in relation to the work of HPC. They may be shared, selectively, with other council partners.
- HPC will not share your telephone number or home address without first gaining consent.
- Your information will not be shared with third parties.
- Partners are asked to consent to the Privacy Notice when they supply contact details to the EO for the first time either orally or electronically and may withdraw their consent at any time.

Good practice for partners

- If an official email address is available, please use it. For example, use the cllr@harlestonepc.org email address unless the councillor has specified otherwise.
- If councillors/partners use their personal email address for council business, emails to and from that account are subject to the same scrutiny as emails originating from the cllr@harlestonepc.org account and must be supplied in the event a Freedom of Information request is received.
- Use the BCC facility on email correspondence. If you need people to know who is on the distribution list use the first line of the text to name those people.
- Remove any personal information from correspondence if you are forwarding emails
- If you are asked to supply contact information for a HPC partner, refer the request to the EO

COMPLAINTS

Anyone with concerns regarding content placed on social media that denigrates parish council representatives or residents, about filming or recordings made during HPC meetings or believes that their personal data has been compromised should contact the Executive Officer. Complaints are covered by the Harlestone Parish Council complaints procedure and their resolution will be overseen by the EO.

Last Reviewed: Jan 2019

Review Due: Jan 2020

Amendments made: April 2019 (shown in Green until adopted by the council)