

# MALPAS Cheshire Online – Social Media Policy

## Scope:

The Malpas Cheshire Online web site and associated Facebook and Twitter pages are designed to support a community led non-commercial and non-profit making service.

Whilst the facility is currently funded by Malpas Parish Council, who have a page of information on the site, it is decreed that the web site should be for the benefit of the whole community, and as such, should not be dominated by local governance issues, or be of a strong political (*note 1*) or sectarian nature.

Whilst promotion of local businesses will be considered, region or national commercial enterprises will not be considered appropriate unless they have a direct positive impact on the local community.

## Virtual Area:

The area of interest is loosely defined as an area covered by the boundaries of the Shropshire-Cheshire border at Grindley Brook, the Wych Valley to the River Dee, the River Dee to the A534 at (but not including) Farndon, the A534 trunk road to Ridley, and the A49 Trunk road back to Grindley Brook.

## Objectives:

To encourage interest and enhance the knowledge and understanding of the residents of Malpas and the surrounding rural communities through publishing integral information, documents and pictures relating to:

- Local businesses
- Local clubs and organisations
- Local Services and Facilities
- Schools in the area
- Churches in the area
- Transport Links
- Our heritage
- Events in the local area
- Local news
- Local Governance issues and information directly impacting on the community including information provided by democratically elected officials defined as the constituency MP and Cheshire West and Chester Ward Councillors.
- Other information from outside the domain area that is deemed of interest to local residents

## Site Content:

News articles and information may be submitted by any individual for inclusion on the web site; Individuals submitting articles should normally be of 18 years of age or more. However articles from minors will be accepted, if deemed appropriate and if they are accompanied by a parents' or guardians' permission.

## Appointment of Editors and Publishers:

The site editors at this time are Carol Broad, Karen Meredith and Chris Whitehurst.

These editors may from time to time appoint other site editors and publishers as they see fit.

However, the Parish Council Page is managed by the Chairman and Vice Chairman as in accordance with their Media Relations Policy.

In future, new appointments may see individuals being allocated /restricted to specific areas of responsibility on the site.

### **Editor/Publisher Responsibilities:**

Malpas Cheshire Online editors and publishers are bound to publish material that will always seek to promote integral positive messages in order to enhance the sites reputation and to limit negative impacts on the local community.

Recognising that sometimes news is not always good, publication of articles of that nature if deemed necessary and in the public interest, should be done in a sensitive manner retaining anonymity of individuals where appropriate.

The site editors/publishers will be responsible for scrutinising articles for publication, generally checking for grammar or spelling errors.

Authenticity of submitted material will not be the responsibility of the editors and any such publication should be accompanied by an author and a date.

An appropriate disclaimer to that effect will be added to the site

When participating in any online communication the editor publisher should:-

- a. Be responsible and respectful; be direct, informative, brief and transparent.
- b. Never knowingly make false or misleading statements.
- c. Not present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment to the reputation of the website.
- d. Be mindful of the information being posted on site and make sure personal opinions are not published so as to give impression as being that of the web team
- e. Avoid material that might bring the Web Team into disrepute or is contrary to this social media policy.
- f. Keep the tone of any comments respectful and informative, never condescending or "loud." Use sentence case format, not capital letters, or write in red to emphasis points.
- g. Refrain from posting controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks. Language that may be deemed as offensive relating in particular to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age or religion or belief should not be published on any social media site.
- h. Avoid personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications.
- i. Never use an individual's name unless they have written permission to do so and/or is in the public interest to do so.
- j. Obtain permission to publish photographs or videos on the web site from the persons or organisations in the video or photograph before being uploaded.
- k. Not post any information or conduct any online activity that may violate laws or regulations, or be libellous and infringe copyright.
- l. Correct any errors promptly once they have been notified of them.

### **Message Handling:**

A "Contact us" messaging facility exists on the site.

Incoming messages relevant to local governance will be forwarded to the Parish Council Clerk, or another appropriate body.

Messages received will be responded to in a courteous manner, but editors should be mindful that not all communication will require a response.

Acknowledgement of receiving the message should be sent as soon as possible.

If the request is for further information a promise to respond should be dispatched to the sender with an estimate of when a reply can be expected.

It may not always be possible to respond immediately to messages, as they may need to be discussed with another editor before an agreed response is reached.

Responses to media requests for general information, questions relating to the facts of an issue, can be answered to explain the Web Team members understanding of the situation.

**Data protection:**

Requests for contact details of individuals should not be given out to anyone, without the express permission being obtained from the appropriate individual.

**Notes**

1/ By law the Parish Council is not allowed to issue, nor to help others to issue, material which is intended primarily to overtly affect public support for a specific political party. However, the issue of material with a political content is not prohibited, if this avoids the oversimplification of facts or arguments, or the reliance on slogans to capture the complexities of opposing viewpoints.

The Policy will be reviewed periodically.

Adopted by Malpas Cheshire Online on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017