



HELMINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE POLICY

Prepared by:	Parish Clerk
Adopted by Resolution of :	Helmingham Parish Council on 15 th May 2026
Reviewed & Re-Adopted:	
Date of Next Review:	May 2027

INTRODUCTION

This policy covers the management of the Helmingham Parish Council website and should be read alongside the Parish Council's Communications Policy and the Parish Council's Privacy Policy.

WEBSITE HOSTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Parish Council is committed to operating a website hosted by a 3rd party provider, having no other connection with the Helmingham Parish Council. The current system is a "content management system" where the Parish Council itself has direct control of day-to-day editing and text updating; maintenance and updating of the system itself is carried out by the 3rd party provider.

WHO DETERMINES WHAT SHOULD BE ON THE WEBSITE?

Subject only to the requirements of the law, the Parish Council has the right to determine what should or should not be included on the Website.

WHAT THE WEBSITE SHOULD CONTAIN

The Website shall contain material that arises from Parish Council business such as agenda, minutes, policies, factual information about the Parish Council and Councillors. It may also include any material that has been commissioned by the Parish Council, such as reports or surveys or material that is directly derived from these.

The Website may also contain other material, such as history and geography of the Parish, news of local events, or any other material of a non-controversial nature which is appropriate for the Website on a "custom and practice" basis. The Website may also possess interactive functionality, customary for such local authority websites, (such as questionnaires, visitor response facilities, links to other sites etc.). The footprint of the Website may change from time to time according to requirements and circumstances, subject to approval by the Parish Council for significant changes.

The Website shall in principle not contain material of a deliberately contentious, offensive or disputatious nature, or material that criticises or implies criticism of one or more members of the public, individual Councillors, groups of Councillors or the Parish Council as a whole. Parish Council meetings can be disputatious, and this is recorded in the Minutes and, once passed, this material may appear on the Website in the minutes or otherwise. Additionally, it can happen that the Parish Council may approve material for inclusion on the Website that not everybody necessarily agrees with.

Regardless of what has been voted on by the Parish Council, the Website shall not contain any material that is libellous or defamatory or in any way against the law or which could expose the Parish Council to legal challenge.

THE WEBMASTER

The Parish Council appoints the Webmaster from amongst sitting Councillors and reviews this appointment annually. The Parish Council reserves the right to replace the Webmaster should they choose not to carry out the wishes of the Parish Council in relation to the updating and appropriate use of the website according to this policy.

The Parish Clerk is also authorised to upload to the website all required documents to facilitate the operation of the Council – such as (but not limited to) agendas, minutes, financial information, policies and important information deemed beneficial to be shared to the community.

The day-to-day working of the Website is subject to the control of the Webmaster who is empowered by the Parish Council to make routine updates to the Website.

The function of the Webmaster is to manage the Website, adding or deleting material, and editing pages as required. The Webmaster shall be empowered to update the Website as is fit without prior reference to the Parish Council. However, other than for totally routine matters (like uploading minutes), the Webmaster should keep the Parish Council informed of activities they may have conducted on the Website.

The Webmaster may ask for professional help as necessary, subject to reasonable cost limits and prior agreement with the Parish Council. Such expenditure should normally be planned and budgeted for the year ahead.

The Webmaster is accountable to the Parish Council as a whole, not to any individual Councillor.

Where the Webmaster has managed the Website in a manner contrary to the will of the Parish Council, the Parish Council may require the Webmaster to make good any deficiencies.

PROCEDURE FOR ADDING NEW MATERIAL TO THE WEBSITE

Any Councillor or member of the Parish may submit material for inclusion on the website PROVIDED THAT it is consistent with this Policy, and also falls within any limits of technical feasibility to upload.

ADVERTISING ON THE WEBSITE

The Parish Council does not permit commercial advertising on the Website. However, it will permit publication of information relating to services based within the Parish or businesses run by members of the Parish where this is considered to provide helpful information to Parishioners.

AUTHORITY DELEGATED TO THE WEBMASTER

Routine updates:

The Webmaster may make routine updates to the Website without prior reference to the Parish Council. Examples of routine updates could be:

- Correcting errors of spelling, syntax or grammar and factual errors.
- Repairing and restoring links that have ceased to work properly.
- Routine structural changes where this improves the organisation of the Website.
- Replacing out of date documents with current versions.
- Adding details of forthcoming activities within the Parish

Responding to requests to upload material:

The Webmaster is empowered to edit or exclude any material submitted for uploading to the Website without explanation to any Councillor or to the person submitting the material. Nevertheless, it would be normal for the Webmaster to attempt to explain outright refusal to upload or major editing actions, and, in order to retain the confidence of the Parish Council, the Webmaster must be prepared to answer for their actions in a full Parish Council meeting.

Accessibility:

In order to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Webmaster will make “reasonable adjustments” to the way in which the website operates to enable the disabled to use it.

Preservation of Archival Material:

It is understood that Archival Material should be preserved without change to the content but can be reorganised or re-structured as required. If the Webmaster considers other “Non-Archival” material to be out of date and no longer relevant, such as advertising an event that no longer takes place, they may consider it for deletion. If the deletions are substantial, the Webmaster will first check with Councillors prior to making significant deletions or significant changes to existing material, for example, by creating an “update plan” that the Parish Council can approve.

Webmaster uploading material:

The Webmaster may upload material to the Website subject to the provisions of this policy. However, the Webmaster should be prepared to answer for their actions to the Parish Council and be prepared to delete the material should the Parish Council pass a motion to that effect. Where it is anticipated that there might be disagreement, it is advisable for the Webmaster to obtain the prior approval of the Parish Council.

Resolution of Disputes:

If there is a dispute about the Webmaster’s decisions or activities, the Parish Council shall adjudicate and whose majority vote shall be considered final.

Timeframe for document uploads:

The Webmaster will make all efforts to upload changes to the website within one working week.

Website limits:

The Parish Council will make every effort to keep file sizes to a minimum although in some cases this may be controlled by an outside source. The Parish Council will endeavour to use the most open and accessible file formats where possible.

Analytics:

The Parish Council reserves the right to use services such as, but not limited to, Google Analytics to provide information to the Council to enable them to optimise the website for future best use.

Cookie Policy:

The website may place and access certain Cookies stored on visitors' computers. All Cookies used by the website are used in accordance with current UK Cookie Law. Certain features of the website may depend upon Cookies to function. UK Cookie Law deems these Cookies to be “strictly necessary”.

This website may use analytics services provided by Google or other providers. Website analytics refers to a set of tools used to collect and analyse usage statistics, enabling us to better understand how Users use the website. This, in turn, enables us to improve the website and the products and services offered through it. The analytics services used by this website may use Cookies to gather the required information. Certain of these Cookies may be placed immediately when you decide to visit the website and it may not be possible to obtain your prior consent. You may remove these Cookies and prevent future use of them (see your browser Help for how to do this).

Back Up:

The backing up of the website is the responsibility of the third party provider, although all essential documents relating to Parish Council business are backed up separately by the Parish Clerk and are never stored solely on the website.