



Communications Policy

1. Introduction & Scope

Bingham Town Council (Council) recognises the importance of active community engagement and this policy outlines the guidelines and responsibilities for the appropriate use of communication channels.

This policy should be used alongside the Council's other adopted policies and procedures, including but not limited to:

- Data Protection Policy
- Data Breach Policy
- General Privacy Notice
- Privacy Notice for Councillors and Staff
- GDPR Compliance Checklist
- Staff Handbook
- Record Retention Policy
- IT Policy
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Media and Recording Policy

Councillors may also wish to read the Civility & Respect Social Media Supplement in conjunction with this policy.

This policy covers Employees, Councillors and Volunteers working in partnership with the Town Council.

This policy applies to the use of all Council communication channels whether the media channels are accessed using Council IT facilities, or equipment belonging to employees or councillors.

The policy is also intended for guidance for others communicating with the Council.

2. Aims:

- Engagement with individuals and communities and successful promotion of Council based services through the use of all media formats;
- To protect the reputation, privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the council, its services, employees, partners and community;
- A consistent approach is adopted and maintained on behalf of Bingham Town Council;
- Council information remains secure and is not compromised through the use of social and online media;

- Communication is effective, timely, appropriate, useful, and engages with a wider audience

3. Data Protection

Bingham Town Council recognises its responsibility to comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 which regulates the use of personal data.

Councillors, employees and volunteers must not send, receive or disseminate proprietary data or any confidential information belonging to Bingham Town Council to or from a third party unless authorised.

Permission to publish photographs or videos on communication materials and social media sites will be sought from the persons, parent / guardian or organisations in the video or photograph before being uploaded.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- The **Town Clerk** is responsible for managing and enforcing this policy and for ensuring communications seek to represent the corporate position and views of the Council
- **Councillors and employees** must ensure their communications are made in a personal capacity and not on behalf of the Council
- **Volunteers** working in partnership with the Council must seek approval from the Town Clerk for all joint communications.

The Town Clerk is the designated 'Council' owner of all communication channels agreed by the Council and will be an administrator/moderator on all accounts. Other employees appointed by the Council may assist the Town Clerk to disseminate information. No account details may be changed without first informing the Town Clerk.

5. Communication Channels

Email:

Councillors and Staff are issued with Council email accounts for the purposes of carrying out their duties.

Email communications to the Council offices will be processed by employees and a response issued on behalf of the Town Council under the direction of the Town Clerk.

Council email accounts will be used for official Council-related activities and tasks and to communicate with residents, stakeholders and contractors.

Employees and Councillors are directed to the Council's IT policy for further information regarding the use of emails.

Notice Boards:

The Council have four official notice boards, and these are used to shared information on behalf of the Council.

Information posted on behalf of the Council will feature an official logo so the communication can be identified by residents.

Financial information relating to the Council's Statutory duties will be shared on the notice boards within the statutory timelines.

Notice boards feature space for community notices to be posted. These notices do not represent the view of Bingham Town Council and will be removed if outdated, feature a business or service and for events that are not local to the Parish.

Buttercross

The Council reserve advertising space within the Town's Buttercross Magazine. Information relating to contacting the Council, local Councillors, events, calendar of meetings and other matters relating to the activities of the Council will be shared.

The Buttercross is delivered free to all Bingham households to enable residents to have contact information. The Council recognises this is not a tool to share information that is time sensitive due the nature of editing and production times of the booklet.

Website

The Council website will be used as the main location for the sharing and publishing of information relating to the Council's activities, plans and statutory duties.

The meeting calendar, agenda and minutes are available for residents to access.

Local information relating to partnership events, planned road works, stakeholder updates and consultations affecting the community will be shared on the website. The Council publish financial documents and information to comply with statutory and transparency requirements, and these are available on the website.

The Council can be contacted through the website, and an email response will be issued for any contact received via the website.

Social Media

The Council recognises that social media can assist in quickly and widely sharing information to the community.

The Council will share information relating to meetings dates, road works, partnership events, local consultations and other matters relating to its responsibilities through the use of a Facebook Page.

It is recognised that social media channels require regular postings to ensure that information is shared on the channel. The Town Council may also post national information where appropriate that may be relevant or of interest to the local community.

6. Communications and Contacting the Council

The Town Clerk or designated officer in consultation with the Mayor, will issue all communications on behalf of the Council. Any views stated will be the views of the Council, as a corporate body. No personal views will be shared.

The Council aim to respond to queries received in a timely manner. If a requires more time to respond, an acknowledgement of receipt will be sent. Phone lines and the Council offices are open to enable those who wish to speak to a member of staff and to assist those without access to email/online forms of communication. The current office opening times are shared through the communication channels.

Council posts on social media platforms e.g. Facebook will have public commenting switched off. A pinned post will supply the Council's email and phone number for public contact. The Town Council wish to ensure that communications can be handled quickly and effectively and do not have the appropriate staffing resource to be responsive on a Social Media platform.

Individual messages received on the Council's social media platforms will receive an automated reply advising the sender to contact the Council via email. No replies will be sent on the social media platform.

Online content will be objective, balanced, informative, accurate, transparent and respectful. Content will respect the privacy of councillors, staff and residents and will not use an individual third party's name unless given written permission to do so.

All social media sites will be checked and updated on a regular basis to ensure that the security settings are in place.

Information that infringes the copyright of others will not be used. Confirmation of copyright of images and other content used online will be obtained prior to posting and may be retained indefinitely.

7. Limitations and restrictions

The Council is aware that many of our employees, councillors and volunteers use social media personally. Posts made in these capacities are not covered within this policy and do not represent the views of Bingham Town Council.

Councillors are aware that their profile as a councillor means the more likely it is they will be seen as acting in an official capacity and so they must ensure that a 'personal view' disclaimer is used. Council employees, councillors and volunteers are encouraged not to use personal social media platforms to engage with members of the public, contractors or customers. The Council requires employees, councillors and volunteers using social media sites to refrain from making any comments, posting any content or engaging in discussions:

- which would adversely affect the Council or the Council's reputation, or that of our customers and suppliers,
- are contrary to the democratic decisions of the council.
- that include Controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks
- which engage in personal attacks, online fights or hostile communications

- give any information which may be deemed libelous or constitutes a criminal offence
- breaches discrimination or other legislation
- constitutes harassment or bullying
- that might damage workings relationships between fellow employees/councillors.
- makes derogatory, discriminatory, defamatory or offensive comments about other staff, councillors, the council or about the people, businesses and agencies the council works with and serves.
- which give personal opinions presented as that of the Council.
- That include web links to official council websites as this may give or reinforce the impression that they are representing the council.

If employees, councillors and volunteers see content online which disparages or reflects poorly on the council they should refer this to the Town Clerk.

Any contact from the public in respect of anything relating to the Council, should be referred to the Town Clerk.

Complaints should not be responded to directly without taking advice from the Town Clerk. Employees, Councillors and volunteers are personally responsible for all content posted on their accounts.

Councillor behaviour required by the Members' Code of Conduct shall apply to online activity in the same way it does to other written or verbal communication.

8. Digital Inclusion and Accessibility

The Council recognises the importance of digital inclusion. The Council's website and online documents comply with accessibility regulations and offer downloadable content in accessible formats. Images posted on social media and the website will include ALT (Alternative) Text for users with visual impairments who may use screen readers where possible. The Town Council share stakeholder information and these documents can only be shared in the format received.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed biannually to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.

This Communications Policy was considered by the Finance, Policy and Resources Committee on 16 June 2026 minute reference 12 and was approved by the Full Council on 07 July 2026, minute reference 7b.

POLICY REVIEW	DATE	MINUTE REF