



ALLITHWAITE AND CARTMEL PARISH COUNCIL



WEBSITE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Approved and adopted: 14/03/2024

TO BE REVIEWED: June 2025 and annually thereafter.

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy covers the management of the Parish Council Website, in particular:

- The scope of the website.
- Management of the website, the Parish Clerk and the Webmaster.
- Criteria and procedures for making changes or additions to the Website.

The website must meet the needs of users with disabilities that include, but not limited to:

- impaired vision
- motor difficulties
- cognitive impairments
- learning disabilities
- deafness or impaired hearing

The website must be able to have its text enlarged and be sufficiently clear, have a good level of colour and contrast and a page layout and navigation that does not present any barriers for users with disabilities or those who use the assistive technology in ways other than by using a monitor, keyboard and mouse.

With the wider adoption of a more inclusive approach and accessibility for all, website accessibility has been made a legal requirement for all UK Public Bodies to meet since 23 September 2018.

2. WHY WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY AFFECTS LOCAL COUNCILS

Public Bodies, which includes parish, town, borough and city councils, must comply with the legal requirement to meet the accessible standards of their website.

The accessibility regulations build on the existing obligations to people who have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 (or the Disability Discrimination 5 Act 1995 in Northern Ireland).

These say that all UK service providers must consider 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled people. Moreover, and taking into consideration, at least 1 in 5 people in the UK have a long term illness, impairment or disability. Many more have a temporary disability, so it is the right thing to do to ensure that publicly funded bodies make their information transparent and accessible.

The responsibility of managing the information on the website will depend, in part, on the Parish Clerk and Webmaster, also, the time the Clerk has available for such updates.

Clearly, all information that is to be uploaded to the website must be approved by the Clerk, no matter who uploads it.

The Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Council website has the following functions:

- To communicate all of the legally required information as indicated in the Transparency Code for smaller authorities 2014. In simple terms, this includes Agendas, Minutes and designated financial information.
- This information is under Minutes/Finance/Policies and Council Members on the new website.
- If the Parish Council wishes, to communicate other information relating to the Parish which is not legally required – but is helpful.

2.1 Definitions

- Parish Clerk - Mrs Christine Downey
- Website - Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Council
- Webmaster – Cllr appointed by the council

2.2 Archive or Archival Material

Material that is a record of Parish Council business, e.g. meetings, reports, surveys, plans or correspondence referred to in the Minutes, Official correspondence received or sent out by the Parish Council.

3. WEBSITE HOSTING ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1** The Council is committed to operating a website hosted by a third-party provider, having no other connection with the Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Council.
- 3.2** The current system is a ‘Content Management System’ where the Parish Clerk and Webmaster have direct control of day-to-day editing and updating.

4. WHO DETERMINES WHAT SHOULD BE ON THE WEBSITE

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

5. WHAT THE WEBSITE SHOULD CONTAIN

- 5.1** The Website shall contain material that arises from Council business such as agendas and minutes, policies, factual information about the Council and Councillors. It should also include any material that has been commissioned by the Council, such as reports or surveys or material that is directly derived from these.
- 5.2** The Website should 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 that 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.
- 5.3** 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 Council as a whole.
- 5.4** 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 Council may approve material for inclusion on the Website that not everybody necessarily agrees with.
- 5.5** Regardless of what has been voted on by 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 Council to legal challenge.

6. THE WEBMASTER

- 6.1** It is highly desirable that an independent Webmaster who enjoys the confidence of the Council, either explicitly with a motion or implicitly from the nature of the proceedings be appointed. If there is more than one Webmaster, it may be advisable to apportion a specific area of the site to each Webmaster.
- 6.2** The function of the Webmaster, is to manage the Website, adding or deleting material, and editing pages as required. As long as they enjoy the confidence of the Council, the Webmaster shall be empowered to update the Website as he sees fit without prior reference to Council and subject to Section 7 below.
- 6.3** Other than for totally routine matters, like uploading minutes, the Webmaster should keep the Parish Clerk informed of activities he may have conducted on the Website. This is in case Councillors make enquiries at Council meetings about changes on the Website when it would be helpful to have more than one person who can explain what the Webmaster has been doing. The Webmaster shall be under direct supervision by the Parish Clerk.
- 6.4** The Webmaster may ask for professional help as necessary, subject to reasonable cost limits and prior agreement with the Council. Such expenditure should normally be planned and budgeted for the year ahead.
- 6.5** The Webmaster is accountable to the Council as a whole. Further, as the Webmaster is a paid service provider, accountability will be on a 'best efforts and goodwill' basis. If the Webmaster is unable or unwilling to implement a decision or wish of the Council, the Council may engage further help to execute its wishes as necessary, without otherwise prejudicing the role of the Webmaster or that of the Parish Clerk.
- 6.6** Where the Webmaster has managed the Website in a manner contrary to the will of the Council, the Council may require the Webmaster to make good any deficiencies, or in extreme cases, pass a motion of 'No Confidence' in the Webmaster and relieve them from their role on the Website. In that case, the Parish Clerk should take back control of the Website password and block any further activities by the Webmaster.
- 6.7** In these circumstances it will be highly desirable for a replacement Webmaster to be appointed. Failing this, it will be necessary for the Parish Clerk to take over control of the entire Website subject to approval by the Council.
- 6.8** Council may appoint a non-councillor external consultant to operate as Webmaster, provided that the external consultant has no conflicting interest nor is part of any identifiable pressure group or political party where those activities and interests might be relevant to the business of the Council.
- 6.9** If there is no Webmaster, e.g. after an election if the previous Webmaster is not re-elected, the Parish Clerk shall update the Website in a caretaker role within the time that they have available until such time as a new Webmaster can be found.

7. PROCEDURE FOR ADDING NEW MATERIAL TO THE WEBSITE.

Any Councillor may submit material for inclusion on the website provided that it is consistent with the general policies in Section 3, and also falls within any limits of technical feasibility to upload.

8. SPECIFIC POWERS OF THE WEBMASTER IN DETERMINING WHAT CAN GO ON THE WEBSITE AND EDITING WHAT IS ALREADY THERE

8.1 Routine updates:

- 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.
- Uploading of agendas, minutes and other parish documents as required.

8.2 Preservation of Archival Material

It is understood that Archival Material (as in the 'Definitions' section above) should be preserved without change to the content but can be reorganised or restructured 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 must check with the Parish Clerk prior to making significant deletions or significant changes to existing material, for example, by creating an 'update plan' that Council can approve.

8.3 Webmaster uploading material

The Webmaster may upload material to the Website with prior agreement with the Parish Clerk, subject to the provisions of Section 3 above. However, the Webmaster should be prepared to answer for his actions in Council and be prepared to delete the material should 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 Council.

8.4 Resolution of Disputes

If there is a dispute about the Webmaster's decisions or activities the matter shall be referred to the full Council whose majority vote shall be considered final. In case of further difficulty see Paragraphs 5.6 and 5.7 above.

9. ALLOCATION OF TASKS BETWEEN THE WEBMASTER AND THE PARISH CLERK

9.1 Parish Clerk

Contact Us /Your Comments /Council Business
Council Events /Diary
Agendas and Minutes
Council Elections
County and District Councillors Committees, Policies /freedom of info Accounts
/Budgets /Elections /Casual Vacancies Staffing /all vacancies. Highways
/local issues
Parish Planning
Grants
Social Media Channels

9.2 The Webmaster

Work as directed by the Parish Clerk, including but not limited to-
Home Page

History

Local Business Directory

Parish Maps

Parish Footpath Map

Photos of the Parish

Parish Councillors

Parish Map

Planning Application updates

Playing Fields Info

Police contact details

Local Events

Social Media Channels

Surveys /Reports

Useful Links

Useful Information

Useful telephone numbers

10. WEBMASTER WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH PARISH CLERK

The Webmaster and the Parish Clerk should operate co-operatively on the management of the Website. The Parish Clerk or the Webmaster may from time to time help in each other's areas, but in the interests of good and harmonious practice, changes (other than trivial typographical corrections) to each other's areas should be done with some kind of consultation with the other party.

In case of disagreement, the normal rules governing the relationship of the Parish Clerk with individual Councillors and with the Council as a whole shall apply.