

Ruyton XI Towns Parish Council

Guidelines for Communications via the Parish Council Website

The objective of the Parish Council website is to ensure that parishioners feel well informed about the activities of the council and the services it provides, offer access to additional information resources relevant to life in the village, and ensure parishioners have a sense of connectedness to the council.

Communications and articles disseminated via the website will:

- be polite, respectful, timely and relevant;
- not contain content that is unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, discriminatory or offensive;
- not contain content copied from elsewhere, for which we do not own the copyright;
- not contain any personal information, other than necessary basic contact details subject to prior approval by the person or organisation concerned;
- be moderated by either the Chair, the Clerk or other nominated Councillor unless the communication forms part of an agreed campaign; and
- not be used for the dissemination of any commercial or political advertising.

When creating content to be published on the Parish Council website, contributors shall make every effort to adhere to the following general guidelines, and some specific “Do’s and Don’ts”:

- Ensure content is objective, balanced, informative and accurate
- Never write anything that you could not say in a public meeting, but use a style that is less formal than one which would normally be employed in such a meeting - understand your audience
- Start with a topic and working title. Write an introduction capturing the crux of the story.
- Write and organise your content. Double-check that the headline matches the story.
- Proofread your work, editing and reformatting as necessary.
- Check that paragraphs are clear, balanced, provide context, and are effectively self-standing.

DO

- Use photos. Always ask the permission of the subject and explain that you are taking photos for the website. You must check that there is parental permission before you use photos of children.
- Consider whether there is other any sensitive matter in photographic content that is not appropriate to publish (or, for example, is not a detail necessary for the integrity of the story it accompanies). Photographs may be edited to remove such detail.
- Make your copy easy to read: Use short paragraphs – four sentences max, and short sentences – twelve on average
- Address your web visitors directly - use the word “you”
- Ensure you include any actions you wish to encourage readers to take

DON'T

- Use jargon, slang, buzzwords and gobbledeygook
- Write your content in the passive tense
- Make repetitive statements
- Include unnecessary filler words
- Use quotation marks unless you are actually directly quoting an individual (in which case, name the source of the quote)