

# Hawkinge Town Council



## Website Policy

Date of review -

Version	Purpose / change	Author	Date Adopted	Minute no
1	New issue	S Wills	8 December 2021	2294

## **WEBSITE POLICY**

### **1. Website Hosting Arrangements**

The Council is committed to operating a website hosted by a 3rd party provider, having no other connection with the Hawkinge Town Council. The present host is Aubergine. The current system is a “Content Management System” where the Council itself has direct control of day-to-day editing and updating; maintenance of the site is carried out by Aubergine.

### **2. 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.

### **3. What the Website should contain**

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

3.2. The Website may also contain other material, such as history and geography of the Town, 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 Council for significant changes.

3.3. 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. 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 Council may approve material for inclusion on the Website that not everybody necessarily agrees with.

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

4. **Website Working Party, composition, and main function**

The day-to-day working of the Website is subject to the control of the Clerk and is empowered by the Council to make routine updates to the Website without prior reference to the Council.

5. **The Webmaster**

5.1. The Town Clerk is the Webmaster and retains overall control.

5.2. 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 Council and subject to section 7 below.

5.3. Other than for totally routine matters, (like uploading minutes), the Webmaster should keep the Council informed of activities he/she may have conducted on the Website.

5.4. 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.

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

5.6. 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.

6. **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 falls within any limits of technical feasibility to upload.

7. **What are the specific powers of the Webmaster in determining what can go on the Website or in editing what is already there?**

7.1. Routine updates The Webmaster may make routine updates to the Website without prior reference to 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.

7.2. 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, to retain the confidence of the Council, the Webmaster must be prepared to answer for his actions in a full Council meeting.

- 7.3. 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, he may consider it for deletion. If the deletions are substantial, it would be advisable to check with Councillors prior to making significant deletions or significant changes to existing material, for example, by creating an “update plan” that Council can approve.
- 7.4. Webmaster uploading material The Webmaster may upload material to the Website 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 Council.
- 7.5. Resolution of Disputes If there is a dispute about the Webmaster’s decisions or activities, the Council shall adjudicate and whose majority vote shall be considered final.