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## For Information

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### Website Policy - 2024/25

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Adopted: 05/09/2024

Chairman: Cllr. D Peat

Minute Ref.: 240905/6

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*Administered by Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to  
Simonstone Parish Council.*

*Review Date: March 2025*

**This policy covers the management of the Simonstone 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.

**Definitions:**

- **Council** – Simonstone Parish Council
- **Councillor** – Councillor of Simonstone Parish Council
- **Parish** – Simonstone
- **Parish Clerk** – Parish Clerk to Simonstone Parish Council.  
The Parish Clerk is an Editor responsible for routine matters such as adding agendas, minutes and meeting dates etc. see section 7.1.
- **Website** – Simonstone Parish Council Website
- **Nominated Editors** – The councillors nominated by the council to be website Editors.
- **Webmaster** – Easy Web Sites
- **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.

**1. Website Hosting Arrangements:**

The Council is committed to operating a website hosted by a third-party provider, having no other connection with the Simonstone Parish Council. The present host is Easy Web Sites who provide website hosting services to other parish councils in and around the Ribble Valley and also provide and host the Council's email domain.

The current system is a 'Content Management System' where the Parish Clerk and nominated Councillors have direct control of day-to-day editing and updating.

**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 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.
- 3.2 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.
- 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.  
However, 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.
- 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. The Editors.**

- 4.1 The function of an Editor is to manage the Website, adding or deleting material, and editing pages as required. So long as they enjoy the confidence of the Council, the Editors shall be empowered to update the Website as they see fit without prior reference to Council and subject to Section 7 below.
- 4.2 The Nominated Editors should keep the Parish Clerk (also an Editor) informed of activities they 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 Editors have been doing. The Nominated Editors shall be under direct supervision of the Parish Clerk.
- 4.3 The Editors 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.
- 4.4 The Editors are accountable to the Council as a whole.
- 4.5 Where the Editors have managed the Website in a manner contrary to the will of the Council, the Council may require the Editors to make good any deficiencies, or in extreme cases, pass a motion of 'No Confidence' in the Editors 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 Nominated editors.

- 4.6 In these circumstances it will be highly desirable for replacement Editors to be nominated. Failing this, it will be necessary for the Parish Clerk to take over control of the entire website subject to approval by the Council.
- 4.7 Council may appoint a non-Councillor external consultant to operate as an Editor, 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.
- 4.8 If there are no Nominated Editors, e.g. after an election if the previous Nominated Editors were not re-elected, the Parish Clerk shall update the whole Website in a caretaker role within the time that they have available until such time as new Nominated Editors can be found.
- 5. 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.

## **6. Specific powers of the Editors in determining what can go on the Website and editing what is already there.**

### **6.1 Routine updates:**

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

### **6.2 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 Editors consider 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 Editors 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.

### **6.3 Editors uploading material:**

Nominated Editors may upload material to the Website with prior agreement with the Parish Clerk, subject to the provisions of Section 3 above. However, the Nominated Editors should be prepared to answer for their 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 all Editors to obtain the prior approval of the Council.

### **6.4 Resolution of Disputes**

If there is a dispute about the Editors 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 4.6 and 4.7 above.

## **7. Allocation of tasks between the Nominated Editors and the Parish Clerk.**

### **7.1 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

## **7.2 The Nominated Editors:**

Work as directed by the Parish Clerk, including but not limited to:

- Home Page
- Items of news
- Local history
- Local Business Directory
- Parish maps
- Parish footpath map and PROW
- Photos of the Parish
- Parish Councillors
- Planning application updates
- Playing Field information
- Police contact details.
- Local events.
- Social Media Channels
- Surveys /Reports
- Useful links
- Useful information
- Useful telephone numbers

## **8. Nominated Editors working relationship with the Parish Clerk.**

The Nominated Editors and the Parish Clerk should operate co-operatively on the management of the Website. The Parish Clerk or the Nominated Editors 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.