

OTTERBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

POLICY FOR COMMUNICATING THROUGH THE USE OF MAILCHIMP

Introduction

1. In May 2020, Otterbourne Parish Council voted to adopt MailChimp as an additional means of communicating with the public; MailChimp is additional and complementary to the dissemination of information on the Parish Council website, the village notice boards, letter drops and through publications including Otterbourne Life Magazine.
2. The Parish Council's audiences are potentially wide and varied however; the focus in this policy is communication with parishioners of the Civil Parish of Otterbourne. The main content that needs to be communicated by the Parish Council is largely static information about its membership, powers and responsibilities together with changing information about its activities, debates and a variety of issues impacting on the village. This is largely recorded in the agenda and minutes and they are therefore fundamental to this policy. The purpose of communication between the Parish Council and Parishioners is:
 - a) to ensure that the Parish Council's role and powers are clearly understood
 - b) to ensure that Parishioners are informed on issues and decisions that affect them
 - c) to maintain an understanding of the range of views that exists within the Parish on matters within the Parish Council's purview
 - d) to engage Parishioners in order to aid decision making
 - e) to ensure that important decisions or actions of the Parish Council are promptly reported to Parishioners
3. The Parish Council recognises that Parishioners increasingly rely on digital means to receive information; this drives the view that the Parish Council should proactively seek out opportunities to communicate and engage with parishioners through a multi-channel approach designed to circulate as much information as possible; the adoption of MailChimp is a tangible example of how the Parish Council has adapted to meet this need. Parishioners are able to sign up, principally via the Parish Council website, to receive information direct to their email address.

Use of MailChimp

4. MailChimp is to be used as a means of passing information direct to those Parishioners that have signed up to receive this service. Its use should be limited to the dissemination of important and/or time sensitive information that would be made publicly available via other means including those identified at paragraph 1 above. Examples of such information include, but are not limited to:
 - Agendas for Parish Council meetings
 - Minutes of Parish Council meetings
 - Annual Parish Council Report
 - Newsletters
 - Key Updates

MailChimp is not to be used for the dissemination of information that is either commercial or political in nature with the exception that contact detail for those elected to Public Office may be included.

Frequency of Use

5. It is important to not unduly constrain how and when information is passed on to Parishioners, however it is also crucial to avoid information overload that could act as a disincentive to recipients continuing to use MailChimp. The expectation is that on average one or two issues per month would be the norm unless circumstance dictates otherwise.

Safeguards

6. From 25 May 2018, the UK Data Protection Act 1998 was superseded by a new General Data Protection Regulation which is more far-reaching and grants data subjects a number of new rights. These include the right to judicial remedy against organisations that have infringed their rights, mandatory data breach reporting, and an organisation adopting “appropriate technical and organisational measures” to protect personal data. The Parish Council is registered annually with the Information Commissioner and any matters should be addressed to the Clerk to the Parish Council in the first instance.
7. A Lead Councillor from the Parish Council will be appointed to manage the use of MailChimp and ensure that only information approved for dissemination by either the Clerk or the Chair is released via MailChimp.
8. The Parish Council notes the additional requirements imposed by the General Data Protection Regulation. It notes that any information of personal or sensitive nature is ‘ancillary’ and not part of its ‘core function’ as described in the regulation and guidance notes. The following statement was agreed:

“Otterbourne Parish Council may collect and use personal information for administration purposes, financial control or to deliver council services, but under no circumstances should the Clerk or a Councillor impart any personal information without consent from the individual concerned”.
9. In addition, the Parish Council is bound by data protection legislation and undertakes to ensure that:
 - email addresses will not be retained unless permission is given and subscribers may unsubscribe at any time
 - email addresses or details will not be shared with any other organisation
 - all emails will be sent “blind” - i.e. recipients will not be able to see other email addresses

Adopted Parish Council Meeting 16 May 2023