



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. Introduction

The Parish Council recognises that social media and networking websites are a regular part of everyday life. Many people engage with local/community groups and organisations through membership of digital networks such as Facebook and Twitter. This policy sets out the Parish Council's approach to its use of social media. It defines the roles & responsibilities within the Parish council for this area and provides councillors and staff with guidelines on responsibilities for the use of social media.

2. Why is the Parish Council using social media?

The Parish Council aims include informing members of the community and the wider local area about what is happening and sharing important news and information. The Parish Council's social media activity supplements the information published on its website and any newsletters it produces.

Through social media, the Council can:

- provide links to useful and interesting information about the Parish and local area published by other people
- better communicate with those using mobile devices and personal computers
- provide information in a timely manner

3. Official social media/networking accounts

The Parish Council operates a Facebook account for the promotion of activities and events and as a communication tool.

Examples of acceptable content are:

- Parish Council meetings information
- Consultation documents
- News and emergency information
- Key dates
- Short comments on hot topics and relevant news
- Polls and information gathering
- Useful links

4. Roles and Responsibilities:

An official Parish Council account on any social media/networking site may only be set up with approval of the full council. Access to, and use of any account, is restricted and managed by authorised roles in the following way:

Authorised Roles:

The Clerk to the Parish Council will be the official account holder and administrator.

Up to two Councillors will be nominated to manage content and support the administrator of any official account.

The Clerk will manage any interface between the Parish Council Social media account and its Website and will be responsible for liaising with the Parish Council's web site provider.

Only these authorised may use the social media account(s) to post information online and access to the account is strictly limited. The Parish Council's social media account(s) will be managed and monitored daily by the Clerk and supported by the nominated councillors.

All information published on the internet must comply with the Parish Council's confidentiality policy and data protection. The social media account will primarily be used to promote 'good news' and information, supplementing content already published on the Parish Council's website. Any employee, Councillor or member of the public who becomes aware of parish council social networking activity that would be deemed distasteful should make the Clerk and/or nominated Councillors aware as soon as possible.

5. Facebook

The account holder/administrator manages the Council's Facebook page. Facebook pages are used to highlight news, make announcements, engage with the community and share information. The account will not be set up to enable "comments" to be posted on the parish Council Facebook page. Requests for something to be posted on the Parish Council's Facebook page, should be directed to the authorised persons.

6. Use of Photos and Video

Only the Clerk and/or nominated Councillors have permission to upload photos and videos. The appropriate permissions must be obtained for all imagery.

7. Personal Accounts on Social Media

Councillors and staff are likely to have personal social media/network accounts. Personal accounts need to be used in a way that does not conflict with the Council's 'Code of Conduct' or terms of their contract of employment. Where no policy or guidelines exist, councillors or employees should use their professional judgment and take the most prudent action possible. If the Parish Council is referred to in a way that is deemed defamatory or confidential information is disclosed, it reserves the right to report the comment and request that it be removed.

Councillors who use personal social media accounts should ensure they are clearly identified as personal and do not in any way imply that they reflect the Council's view. Councillors should always present a professional image and not disclose anything of a confidential nature. Comments of a derogatory, proprietary, or libellous nature should not be made and care should be taken to avoid guesswork, exaggeration and colourful language.

8. Responding to direct messages posted on social networking sites

If appropriate, the Clerk will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible to all questions received via social networking sites. All formal requests, comments, enquiries or complaints should be emailed to the Parish Council using the contact form on the website.

9. Rules

The Parish Council may monitor forums and blogs to gain indirect feedback. The Parish Council may post replies on forums or blogs to answer queries or address factual corrections, but must generally take a cautious approach before getting involved in contentious issues.

The Parish Council reserves the right to take any necessary steps to protect members of the Parish community and will delete any comments referencing the Parish Council, which are deemed abusive or offensive in anyway.

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