



Policy:	Social Media	Date of adoption by PC:	October 2021
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Introduction

The Parish Council's social media channels supplement the information published on its website and can remind people of important events and alert followers instantly to breaking news. The Parish Council can link to interesting and useful information about the Parish and local area published by other people.

Scope

This policy is to provide Councillors and staff with guidelines on responsibilities of use and covers all forms of social media and social networking sites which include (but are not limited to) the Parish Council website and Facebook.

The use of social media does not replace existing forms of communication. The principles of this policy apply to parish councillors and council staff and also apply to others communicating with the Parish Council. The policy sits alongside relevant existing policies, including the Privacy Policy, which need to be taken into consideration. The current Code of Conduct applies to online activity in the same way it does to other written or verbal communication.

Individual parish councillors and council staff are responsible for what they post, and do so within the bounds of any authority delegated to them when they post on behalf of the Parish Council, and do so only via the Parish Council profile. In the main, councillors and council staff have the same legal duties online as anyone else, but failure to comply with the law may have more serious consequences.

Limits of use: An official account on any social media platform may only be set up with consent from the Parish Council. Only authorised individuals may use these accounts to post online, and access to the account is strictly limited. The Parish Council's social media accounts are managed and monitored by the Parish Clerk with the assistance of appointed administrators.

All information published on the internet must comply with the GDPR regulations. Social media accounts will primarily be used to promote news and information, supplementing content already published on the Parish Council's website which remains the only platform for publishing statutorily required documents.

Any councillor or member of the public who becomes aware of social networking activity that would be deemed distasteful should make the Parish Clerk aware as soon as possible.

Facebook



The Facebook page is used to highlight news, make announcements and share information with the community. Comments posted on the Facebook page are views of individuals and do not represent the views of the Parish Council.

The Facebook page is not an appropriate forum for debating the Council's actions or policies. Users are encouraged to engage with the Council at Council Meetings or through established communication channels. All formal requests, views, enquiries or complaints should be emailed to the Parish Council using the contact form on the website or the link on the Facebook page.

By choosing to comment and/or utilise the Parish Council's Facebook page users are deemed to agree to this Policy.

Social media moderation policy

The Parish Council Facebook page is reactively moderated. The Council cannot accept responsibility for the content of any comment.

The Parish Council reserves the right to take any steps deemed necessary to protect its members, its staff and members of the community and will delete any comments which are deemed abusive or offensive in any way. Inter alia, the Council reserves the right to remove comments received on Facebook that:

- contain abusive, obscene, indecent or offensive language, or link to obscene or offensive material,
- contain swear words or other sorts of profanity,
- are completely removed from the topic of conversation or are not relevant to the item posted on the wall,
- contain abusive language towards an individual involved in the thread, other organisations or the page administrator,
- contain inaccurate or misleading information,
- constitute spam or promote or advertise products, except where it is for an event, publication or similar item that has direct relevance to the subject of discussion,
- are designed to cause nuisance to the page administrator or other users.

For serious and/or persistent breaches of the moderation policy, the Council reserves the right to prevent users from posting further comments.

Use of Photos and Video

The appropriate permissions must be obtained for all imagery, particularly with regard to images of children where parental permission is required.

Personal Accounts on Social Media

Parish Councillors and staff who post on social media using a personal profile remain bound by the constraints of the Code of Conduct, or terms of employment, including in relation to perception of bias and bringing the Council into disrepute.



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Councillors should at all times 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. 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.