

Fountains Abbey Parish Council

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Councillor Code of Conduct (Social Media / Media)

Fountains Abbey Parish Council

Councillor Conduct: Social Media / Media

1. At the time of drafting the Parish Council does not operate social media accounts as a means of communication.
 - a. It does have a website.
 - b. It is considering starting a WhatsApp account.
2. This code of conduct, therefore, is primarily concerned with the use of social media by councillors and staff on their own account.
3. In this Code of Conduct, 'Social Media' includes but is not limited to the following platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TickTock etc. Media includes the print or broadcast media.
4. This Code of Conduct;
 - a. applies to Elected Members, Co-opted Members and staff of Fountains Abbey Parish Council.
 - b. applies to all communications expressing opinions concerning Parish Council business at all times.
5. Any person can report on meetings, but
 - a. although this includes members and staff of the Parish Council – whether present at a meeting or not - they have a duty to the Parish Council code of conduct.
 - b. confidential sessions exclude the right to report.
6. When Parish Councillors, co-opted members and staff of Fountains Abbey Parish Council use social media they should act in the best interests of the Parish Council.
7. When Parish Councillors, co-opted members and staff of Fountains Abbey Parish Council express an opinion concerning matters relating to Parish Council business, such an opinion should not be passed of as policy of the Parish Council unless it is or has been ratified as such.
8. When Parish Councillors or staff of Fountains Abbey Parish Council communicate matters in the public realm, they should, in any event, be clear as to who they are speaking as; a member of the public, a councillor, a politician or a business.
9. Remember that what has been put up on social media cannot be retracted. (note the case of former Erdington Town Councillor and Barrister regarding a remark made about a public figure on Twitter in 2010).
10. Therefore, exercise caution and care when using social media to communicate about matters that concern the Parish Council.