



# WINTERTON-ON-SEA PARISH COUNCIL

---

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The aim of this policy is to outline the terms agreed by Winterton-on-Sea Parish Council on their representation online, specifically on communication channels referred to as social media.

The inception of a digital age has changed the expectations of the public and their engagement with organisations. The community wishes to be able to communicate with council online and there is a recognised need for council to be represented on social media sites.

### SCOPE OF THE POLICY

All employees, volunteers and members are expected to comply with this policy at all times to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of our council.

Breach of this policy by councillors may be dealt with under the Code of Conduct. Breaches of this policy by employees may be dealt with by the Council's disciplinary procedures and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.

The policy will cover activity including (but not restricted to):

- Winterton-on-Sea Parish Council owned and run websites
- Winterton-on-Sea Parish Council email addresses
- Facebook

### USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The council will use social media for the following activities:

- Awareness of incidents or planned works that may affect the village or surrounding area;
- Promotion of Council activities including meetings, consultations and projects;
- Promotion of Winterton Village Hall including events;
- Responding to comments made by members of the public where appropriate.

This may include the Council's own Facebook page; or representation on a Community Page for the village.

Winterton-on-Sea Parish Council hereby agrees that:

- Only agreed personnel may represent council under their social media guise (Parish Clerk); overseen by the Chairman.
- Representation on behalf of the Council may only come from an official Parish Council account, and not from an individual's personal account.
- All published correspondence will follow council's agreed Equal Opportunities policy.

- Personal information will be handled in accordance with current Data Protection laws.
- No political bias will be demonstrated.
- No personal opinions will be expressed via Council accounts.
- Copyright and libel laws will always be upheld.
- Social media channels will be updated as soon as is reasonably possible.
- The right is reserved to edit and/or delete any correspondence purporting to council which is deemed to be offensive, inappropriate, factually incorrect or in any other way derogatory.
- No photographs or videos will be uploaded without the express permission of any person/s featured.

Rules for the use of Social Media are attached at Appendix 1.

### **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

We will establish appropriate and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of our social media policy.

Where a matter is raised on social media which requires fuller investigation or response by the Council, the writer will be informed that this will be raised at the next meeting and will be invited to engage with the Council to inform that discussion.

### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY**

The Council has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.

The Clerk is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for changes to minimise risks to our work. All employees, volunteers and members should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it.

Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to the Parish Clerk.

### **COMPLAINTS**

A complaint raised on social media will not be considered a formal complaint, however the complainant will be invited to formally complain through the official channels and a link to the Council's Complaints Procedure will be associated with the complainant's comment on social media, where possible.

**Policy Agreed: April 2022**

**Review Date: April 2023**

### Rules for use of social media

Whenever you are permitted to use social media in accordance with this policy, you must adhere to the following general rules:

- 1.1. Do not upload, post or forward a link to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content.
- 1.2. Any employee, volunteer or member who feels that they have been harassed or bullied, or are offended by material posted or uploaded by a colleague onto a social media website should inform the Parish Clerk or the Chairman of the Council.
- 1.3. Never disclose commercially sensitive, personal, private or confidential information. If you are unsure whether the information you wish to share falls within one of these categories, you should discuss this with the Parish Clerk or the Chairman of the Council.
- 1.4. Do not upload, post or forward any content belonging to a third party unless you have that third party's consent.
- 1.5. Before you include a link to a third-party website, check that any terms and conditions of that website permit you to link to it.
- 1.6. When making use of any social media platform, you must read and comply with its terms of use.
- 1.7. Be honest and open, but be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people's perceptions of the council.
- 1.8. You are personally responsible for content you publish into social media tools.
- 1.9. Don't escalate heated discussions, try to be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations.
- 1.10. Don't discuss employees without their prior approval.
- 1.11. Always consider others' privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory e.g., politics and religion.
- 1.12. Avoid publishing your contact details where they can be accessed and used widely by people you did not intend to see them, and never publish anyone else's contact details.