



Social Media Management Policy

1. Introduction

This policy outlines how Whixall Parish Council will use and manage social media to add quality to its communication with parishioners. In addition, it outlines basic guidance for personal social media use by Councillors and employees.

2. How Social Media Will be Used

The Parish Council will only use forms of social media which do not require a lot of staff time and interaction with followers. It aims to keep members of the community and the wider local area informed and up to date using media which is easily accessible and can be effectively managed using limited staff resources (1 day per week).

Social Media will always be used to supplement the information published on the Parish Council website and in annual newsletters.

Through social media, the Parish Council will:

- remind people of important upcoming events;
- alert followers instantly to breaking news;
- signpost followers to services provided by Shropshire Council etc.
- provide links to relevant and interesting information published by others; and
- enhance its communication with those using mobile devices.

The Parish Council will not:

- monitor social media on a daily basis;
- respond directly to customer enquiries other than by providing an email address; or
- engage in ongoing debate

3. Use of Facebook

The preferred medium is Facebook as this can be managed with less interaction than most other forms of social media.

Whixall Parish Council will operate its own Facebook page for the promotion of activities and events and as a communication tool. An official account on any other form of social media may only be set-up with consent from the Parish Council following a review of the implications on staff time.

The Parish Council's Facebook page will be used primarily to supplement content already published on the Parish Council's website by doing the following:

- highlighting news;
- making announcements;
- engaging with the community; and
- sharing information,

The page will be managed and monitored by the Parish Clerk who will use it to post information directly related to the parish council as well as links to other relevant local and national information.

Examples of acceptable Facebook content are:

- Agendas and Minutes;
- Consultation documents;
- News feed & emergency information;
- Event listings;
- Key dates;
- Polls and information gathering; and
- Useful links

As with all forms of online communication, information published on social media must comply with the Parish Council's confidentiality and data protection policies.

4. Purdah

During Purdah, the period during the six-week run up to an election, the Parish Council will continue to publish service announcements using Facebook and will use the medium to encourage local electors to vote, but will not provide information or links to anything that could be construed as party political.

5. Comments and Questions

The Parish Council is not responsible for comments and messages on its Facebook page as these are the views of individuals, not of the Council. Therefore, the Council's Facebook page will be set up so that comments and messages are permanently disabled. The page will clearly state that communication with the Parish Council should be made by email, which is monitored on a regular basis.

The Parish Clerk has the authority to consider requests for items from third parties to be posted or shared on the Parish Council's Facebook page.

6. Use of Photos and Video

Only the Parish Clerk will be permitted to upload photos and videos. The appropriate permissions must be obtained for all imagery and the originator must be acknowledged.

7. Personal Use of Social Media

7.1 Councillors

When engaging online, Councillors are personally responsible for what they publish. The Members Code of Conduct applies to Councillor's online activity in the same way it would for other written or verbal communication. Councillors should comply with the general principles of the Code in what they publish and what they allow others to publish in relation to the work of the Council.

7.2 Councillors and Employees

Councillors and employees must not

- Publish content using an affiliation with the Council for the promotion of personal financial interests, personal commercial ventures, or personal campaigns;
- Publish content in a way which appears as if the Council has endorsed it;
- Share sensitive or confidential information about the Council or its employees or councillors nor upload any photos or videos of colleagues without their express permission;

- Make any comment or post material so as to give a reasonable person the impression that the office of Councillor or the Council has been brought into disrepute;
- Present political or personal opinion as representative of the Council;
- Post or publish any material that contravenes the Council's Code of Conduct Policy;
or
- Disclose confidential information relating to their role as a Councillor.

8. Policy Changes

The Parish Clerk is permitted to make occasional changes to the policy to allow for immediate action in unexpected situations. Changes to the policy will be highlighted immediately to the Chair and at the next Council meeting where they will be discussed and approved if applicable.

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| Reviewed | | Minute Ref | |