

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### General

Social media can bring great advantages in communication and this policy is intended to encourage its responsible use.

### Responsibilities of Staff and Councillors

Users of social media must ensure that they use social media sensibly and responsibly, without adversely affecting the Council or damaging its reputation and credibility. They must also ensure that they keep to any Council guidelines regarding the use of social media.

The use by staff of social media whilst at work is currently restricted to the Bishopstoke Parish Council Facebook page. The use of Twitter by staff is not currently permitted nor is use of chat rooms. Staff using social media must be aware of and comply with the Council's Social Media policy.

The following guidelines should be followed by staff. These guidelines should also be followed by Councillors when acting in their capacity as a Councillor, or when signing off an email, comment, posting, or any other form of digital entry in social media, as a Councillor. Where necessary a Councillor should add the caveat that 'the views expressed are those of the author and do not reflect the views and opinions of Bishopstoke Parish Council'.

- No Parish Council content should be published unless it is already on the Council's website, or with the prior approval of the Clerk.
- Information should be accurate, fair, thorough and transparent.
- It should be noted that what is published will be in the public domain indefinitely and that you may be held personally responsible for the content that you publish.
- Compliance with data protection, intellectual property and copyright laws should be ensured.
- Confidential matters from Council meetings must not be published or reported on in social media.
- Details about customers, partners or suppliers should not be referred to without their prior written approval (ensuring no advertisement of the services and goods of third parties).
- Staff and Councillors must refrain from promoting themselves as working for the Council, in a way which has, or may have, the effect of bringing the Council into disrepute.
- Staff and Councillors must not disclose personal data or information about the Council, or its service users, employees or Councillors that breach the Data Protection Act 1998 (e.g. photographs, images).

- Staff and Councillors must not give out personal details such as home address and telephone numbers unless specifically required for the purposes of the comment or posting, for example to give contact details that need to be publicised for which permission has been given, or for which details are already available in the public domain.
- Staff and Councillors must not make any defamatory remarks about the Council, its service users, employees, Councillors or conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the Council.
- Staff and Councillors must not use insulting, offensive or racist language, or engage in any other conduct that would not be acceptable in the workplace.
- Staff and Councillors must not receive, send, or display offensive messages or pictures.
- Staff and Councillors must not issue passwords to third parties unless authorised to do so, or use anyone else's password or identity.

### **Control of the Bishopstoke Parish Council Facebook Page**

Postings may only be made by the Clerk or Assistant Clerk, who will be responsible for removing any unacceptable comments. Comments by others will be considered unacceptable if they do not follow the guidelines outlined above for staff and Councillors. The Assistant Clerk will use his/her best endeavours to check the Facebook page each working day, with arrangements being put into place for others to check the page during the Assistant Clerk's holiday periods.

Postings by others are not permitted on the Bishopstoke Parish Council Facebook Page unless there is a clear case for doing so. Such cases to be determined by the Assistant Clerk and/or the Clerk.

Any breaches of the above policy should be reported to the Clerk.

27/05/2014