

Parish Council of Newlands

Social Media Policy

Adopted by the Council at its meeting held on 20 June 2019 [Min ref: 030/20C d]

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is intended to help Councillors and Council staff to make appropriate decisions about the use of internet services and social media such as emails, blogs, social networking websites, podcasts, forums, message boards or comments on web-articles, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and other relevant social media websites.
- 1.2 Councillors and Council staff are expected to abide with this policy to protect the reputation, privacy, confidentiality and interests of the Council, its services, employees, partners and community.
- 1.3 Councillors are reminded that online activity is covered by the Code of Conduct for Members in the same way as other forms of communication.
- 1.4 An up-to-date copy of this policy shall be published on the Council's website.

2. Use of Social Media

- 2.1 The Council may use its website and other social media to:
 - Post notices and minutes of meetings;
 - Announce new information appropriate to the Council
 - Advertise vacancies for Councillors;
 - Advertise events and activities;
 - Post newsworthy stories;
 - Share information from partners i.e. Police, library, district council etc.; and
 - Post other items as the Council see fit.
- 2.2 The Council may use email and online messaging services to communicate between Councillors and Council staff.
- 2.3 The Clerk shall be responsible for posting and monitoring of the content on the Council's website and social media pages and ensuring compliance with this Social Media Policy.
- 2.4 The Clerk shall have authority to immediately without notice or comment, remove any posts from the Council's social media pages if they are deemed to be inflammatory or of a defamatory or libellous nature. Such posts will also be reported to the hosts (e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc.)
- 2.5 Anyone who has concerns regarding content placed on the Council's online/social media sites should report them to the Clerk.

3. Rules for using social media

- 3.1 Council staff and Councillors shall not allow their interaction on any websites or blogs to damage their working relationships with others. They shall not make any derogatory, discriminatory, defamatory or offensive comments about other staff, Councillors, the Council or about the people, businesses and agencies that the Council works with and serves.
- 3.2 Council staff and Councillors are responsible for what they post. They are personally responsible for any online activity conducted via their published e-mail address, which is used for Council business. Both Council staff and Councillors are strongly advised to have separate council and personal email addresses.
- 3.3 When participating in online communication, Council staff and Councillors must:
- Be responsible and respectful; be direct, informative, brief and transparent;
 - Never make false or misleading statements;
 - Not present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment. They must protect the good reputation of the Council;
 - Be mindful of the information posted on sites and make sure personal opinions are not published as being that of the Council;
 - Refrain from posting controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks;
 - Avoid personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications;
 - Never name an individual third party unless you have written permission to do so;
 - Seek permission to publish original photographs or video from the persons or organisations in the video or photographs before they are uploaded;
 - Respect the privacy of other councillors, staff and residents;
- 3.6 If staff or Councillors blog or tweet in a personal capacity, they must not act, claim to act or give the impression that they are acting as a representative of the Council. They should not include web links to official Council websites as this may give or reinforce the impression that they are representing the Council.
- 3.7 Residents and Councillors should note that not all communications require a response or will be responded to. If a matter is intended to be brought officially to the Council's attention then it may be raised at a Council meeting. The response will then be communicated via the minutes of the meeting.