

Wistow Parish Council

Social Media Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide guidance to councillors in the use of online communication tools, collectively referred to as social media.

Adopted date:

Review date:

Relevant Legislation:

The Data Protection act 2018

Introduction:

Social media is a collective term used to describe methods of publishing to the internet, which can include but is not limited to:

- Facebook, Instagram and other social networking sites
- Twitter and other forms of micro blogging sites
- Youtube, TikTok and other video streaming and Podcast sites
- LinkedIn
- Blogs and discussion forums

The use of Social Media does not replace existing forms of communication or the legal duties of the council to publish information to its website as covered by the publication scheme, it should therefore be seen only as a way to enhance communication with the public.

Who This policy apply to:

The principles of this policy apply to all Parish Councillors and the Clerk, and it is also intended as a guide to members of the public and other third parties communicating with The Council.

Policy:

1. The Council shall appoint a Facebook working group of two councillors, the working group will be responsible for posting and monitoring content, ensuring it complies with the Social Media Policy. The working group will have the authority to remove posts made by third parties on our Social Media pages which are deemed to be of a defamatory, libel nature.
2. The Council shall appoint two Webmasters who are responsible for updating and maintaining the Parish Council Website, ensuring it complies with the Publication Scheme.

A Facebook page will be used to support and distribute information from the Parish Council Website.

This page may be used to:

- Distribute links to agendas and minutes from the council website
- Dates of meetings
- Advertise events and activities
- Good news stories linked website or press page
- Vacancies

- Re-tweet or share information from partner agencies such as Principal Authorities, Police, Health etc.
- Planning applications
- Post or Share information from other parish related community groups such as schools, sports clubs, community groups and charities
- Refer resident queries to the clerk and all other councillors

Whilst posting on behalf of the council it is important that councillors follow strict guidance on what can be posted, councillors should recognise that they are posting objectively on behalf of "The Council"

The Facebook working group must not:

- present personal opinions as that of the council
- express any views which may have a Party-political bias
- present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment to the council
- post content that is contrary to the democratic decisions of the council
- post controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks
- engage in personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications
- publish photographs or videos of minors without parental permission
- post any information that infringes copyright of others
- post any information that may be deemed libel
- post online activity that constitutes bullying or harassment
- bring the council into disrepute
- post offensive language relating to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age, religion or belief
- conduct any online activity that violates laws, regulations or that constitutes a criminal offence

When participating in any online communication it is essential councillors act responsibly; keep the tone of your comments respectful and informative, never condescending or "loud." Use sentence case format, not capital letters, or write in red to emphasis points, while being direct, informative, brief and transparent.

A Councillor is within their rights as a member of the public to maintain personal social media accounts, but they should make clear the opinions they hold on these sites are personal and not the view of the Council as a whole. Councillors' views posted in any capacity in advance of matters to be debated by The Council at a meeting may constitute Pre-disposition, Predetermination or Bias and may require the individual to declare an interest at council meetings.

Members of Public Correspondence:

Members of the public should note there may not be immediate responses to communications as they could require discussion by the Parish Council.

The working group can respond to the member of the public's comments if there is an already known response, (i.e. When is the date of the next meeting? Has the council submitted a response to the planning authority?) If a matter needs further consideration it shall be forwarded to the clerk who shall place it on the next available agenda. Any response will then be included in the minutes of the

meeting. The poster shall be informed via the page or direct message that this is the case.

The moderator shall refer correspondence to the Parish Clerk. The poster will be informed by way of response to this fact and also be invited to correspond with the Parish Clerk directly.

Reporting misuse of social media:

Councillors or Members of the Public who have concerns about content being posted to Social Media should report these to the Parish Council Clerk, who will deal with complaints in accordance with our complaints procedure.