

Old Catton Parish Council

Social Media Policy

1. Purpose

The Parish Council recognises the importance of social media as a tool for communication and engagement with the community. This policy outlines the appropriate use of social media by Councillors, employees, and volunteers to ensure professionalism, transparency, and compliance with legal and ethical standards.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Parish Council social media accounts and to Councillors, employees, and volunteers who use social media in connection with Parish Council activities or in a personal capacity where their actions could impact the Council's reputation.

3. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure the responsible use of social media in line with the Council's values and objectives.
- Protect the Council's reputation and ensure compliance with relevant legislation.
- Promote effective and positive communication with the community.

4. Definition of Social Media

Social media includes, but is not limited to, platforms such as Parish Council website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogs, and any other online communication tools.

5. Responsibilities

- **Councillors, Employees, and Volunteers:**
 - Use social media responsibly and in a manner that reflects positively on the Parish Council.
 - Refrain from posting content that is defamatory, offensive, discriminatory, or otherwise inappropriate.
 - Clearly state when opinions expressed are personal and not those of the Council.
- **Clerk to the Council:**
 - Manage and oversee official Parish Council website and social media accounts.
 - Ensure content is accurate, relevant, and up to date.

6. Guidelines for Official Use

- Official Parish Council social media accounts will be used to:
 - Share news, events, and updates relevant to the community.
 - Promote Council meetings, initiatives, and consultations.
 - Respond to queries and provide accurate information.
- All posts and responses must be approved by the Clerk or delegated representative.

7. Personal Use of Social Media

- Councillors, employees, and volunteers should:
 - Avoid sharing confidential or sensitive Council information.
 - Refrain from posting content that could damage the Council's reputation.
 - Maintain professionalism in any discussion related to Parish Council activities.

8. Legal Considerations

Social media use must comply with:

- The Equality Act 2010.
- Data Protection regulations, including GDPR.
- Laws on defamation, harassment, and intellectual property rights.

9. Monitoring and Moderation

- The Parish Council reserves the right to monitor its social media accounts and remove inappropriate or harmful content.
- Any breaches of this policy will be addressed through the Council's disciplinary or grievance procedures.

10. Training

The Parish Council will provide training and guidance on effective and responsible social media use for councillors, employees, and volunteers.

11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required by changes in legislation, technology, or Council activities.

12. Policy Approval and Adoption

This policy was approved and adopted by the Parish Council on 13th January 2025.

Adopted: 13th January 2025

Reviewed: 12th January 2026