



Social Media Policy

Policy Statement

The aim of this policy is to set out a Code of Practice to provide guidance to staff and councillors in the use of social media.

Definition

The definition of social media continues to evolve as platforms and technologies develop. Overall, it refers to any platforms which can be used to share content.

Use of Social Media

The use of social media will not replace the Parish Council's existing forms of communication.

Social media may be used to:-

- post details of meetings
- advertise events and activities
- announce news stories connected to the Council
- advertise Council vacancies
- post or share information from other parish related community groups such as the school, sports clubs, community groups and charities
- refer enquiries to the clerk.

Responsibilities and Procedures

A designated member of the Parish Council is the appointed administrator of Scarning Parish Council's social media channels including Facebook and Next Door. All postings should be directed through this officer. Any postings should only reflect content which it would be acceptable to publish to the general public in other Parish Council communications.

The Administrator

The Administrator will be responsible for posting and monitoring content ensuring that it complies with the Council's Social Media policy. The Administrator (if necessary in consultation with the chair and the clerk) will have authority to remove any posts made by third parties from the Council's social media pages which are deemed to be defamatory; false or misleading; insulting, threatening or abusive; obscene or of a sexual nature; offensive, racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory against religious or other groups; promoting illegal activity; or intended to deceive.

Guidance to Parish Councillors

Individual parish councillors are personally responsible for any online activity conducted via social media, or their published email address, which is used for Council business. Councillors are strongly advised to have separate Council and personal email address. All councillors must adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct.

When participating in any online communication councillors must not;

- Hide their identity using false names or pseudonyms
- Present their personal opinions as those of the Parish Council, or that are contrary to the Council's Code of Conduct, or any other Council policies
- Present themselves in a way that may cause embarrassment to the Council, or bring the Council into disrepute
- Disclose any potentially confidential or sensitive information about the Council's business
- Make false or misleading statements
- Post controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks
- Use language that may be deemed offensive relating in particular to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age or religion or belief
- Engage in personal attacks, online fights or hostile communications
- Publish photographs or videos that infringes the copyright of others
- Post any information that may be deemed libellous
- Post any information or conduct any online activity that may violate laws or regulations, or which constitutes a criminal offence

Publishing untrue statements about a person which is damaging to their reputation is libel and can result in a court action and a fine for damages.

This also applies if someone else publishes something libellous on your social media site. A successful libel claim will result in an award of damages against you.

Monitoring and Review

This policy was approved at the Council's meeting held on July 19 2021.

The policy will be reviewed in January 2023, or earlier if circumstances require.