

CRONTON PARISH COUNCIL

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



THE NEED FOR A POLICY

Digital and social media have an increasing impact on everyday activity. To some it is the main means of communication. Large corporations, government departments and local authorities at all levels recognise the value in making direct contact using social media platforms.

This policy sets out how the Parish Council will use social media to improve the way it communicates with residents, other agencies and organisations.

TYPES OF MEDIA

Social media includes websites and online platforms which allow people to interact. It includes but is not limited to platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Linked-In and Snapchat.

Social media provides an opportunity to seek and provide information, create various kinds of groups and establish networks of communication. This policy relates to all social media platforms used by the Parish Council or by an individual councillor.

MAIN PRINCIPLES

Any form of communication can be challenging and at times misinterpreted. Social media provides instant communication but lacks the advantage of face – to - face contact.

Any comments or statements made on social media can be seen in an instant anywhere in the world and are permanent. It is therefore critical that any information posted on social media is carefully considered. It must be factually accurate, informative and lack ambiguity. It is therefore essential that it is proofed and, if necessary, edited before being published.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Parish Council will appoint a monitoring officer who will ensure any use of social media is in accordance with this policy.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Parish Council communications using social media must satisfy the following criteria:

All communication will be relevant, honest and preferably eliminate any chance of offence.

Be lawful, not libellous, abusive, threatening, obscene, harmful

or in any way discriminatory.

Not contain any copyrighted material including photographs, video or audio without the permission of the originator or rights holder.

Not contain any personal information other than contact details.

Must comply with all data protection legislation.

Councillors must make it very clear whether they are communicating as a private individual or as a councillor.

Councillors must not make any statements on behalf of the council unless previously agreed at a properly convened full council meeting.

In all circumstances councillors must not breach confidentiality or bring the council into disrepute.

GUIDELINES

Do not use social media to make personal attacks or be rude or make offensive comments.

Maintain confidentiality at all times.

Do not publish any racist, homophobic, anti - faith, sexist, ageist or any material which will cause offence.

Do not harass, bully or intimidate anyone.

Do not post material that will bring the Parish Council into disrepute.

Consider carefully before posting any material you have received solely as a result of you being a Parish Councillor.

POTENTIAL ISSUES

Libel Posting something that is untrue about an individual and is damaging to their reputation may result in legal action being taken.

Copyright Many articles, photographs, video and audio are copyrighted and cannot be used without the express permission of the copyright holder.

Bias If a councillor wishes to make a statement about a council issue it must be made clear that it is your opinion only. You should make it clear that the Parish Council will reach a decision on the issue after a full debate based on all the available facts.

Data Personal information must not be published without the express permission of exchange.

The main interaction of the Parish Council with the community will always be by physical contact at properly convened council meetings. This includes any emails or information received by personal exchange.

Social media will not be considered as appropriate for contacting the council for official purposes other than by using the contact form on the Parish Council website.

The Parish Council will remove any social media content from its platforms used for outward going information that:

Breaches any legislation

Is offensive or threatening

Is racist, homophobic, sexist, ageist, or likely to cause offence.

Contains inappropriate language

Is clearly spam or a case of being trolled

Is clearly untrue and potentially libellous

Breaches copyright laws

Unrelated to the issue being discussed

In order to ensure that all discussions are productive, respectful and meet with this policy contributors must follow these guidelines:

- Respect other's points of view
- Personal attacks will not be tolerated
- Abide by all laws, be accurate and give credit where it is due
- Stay on topic
- Do not publish anything for commercial reasons or to advertise products

In the event that a social media communication from the council can be shown to breach any of the standards mentioned above, the Parish Council (or Monitoring Officer) will immediately delete the communication pending review by the full council.

Approved and adopted: 9 May 2023