



Ashington Parish Council

Social Media Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this social media document is to demonstrate that Ashington Parish Council is committed to supporting the use of social media, providing a clear framework for interacting online.

What is Social Media?

'Social Media' is the term commonly given to websites and applications such as Facebook and Twitter that share content and interact with other users. Social media networks provide a free channel to communicate the Parish Council's messages.

When does this policy apply?

When you use social media professionally you are writing on behalf of the Parish Council. The consequences of publishing inaccurate information through social media sites like Facebook and Twitter can be significant. Social media is instant, worldwide and mistakes can be recorded and then re-used by others even after they've been removed.

Social media usage

There are two types of social media activity covered under this policy:

- Parish Council accounts
- Personal accounts not linked to council business

Parish Council Accounts

Parish Council accounts are those social media accounts which represent Parish Council business. They are used to:

- To publish information about the work of the Parish Council to a wider audience.
- Not to enter into online debates on the work of the Council.
- Social Media must NOT be used in the recruitment process for employees or Councillors as this could lead to privacy, potential discrimination claims and also data protection issues, with the exception of placing vacancy advertisements.

Approved Parish Council Social Media Accounts

- Facebook – Set up page to publish Council information that is locked for editing.
- Parish Council website www.ashingtonpc.org.uk

Users of Council Social Media

- The Parish Clerk is the Council's nominated Press Officer authorised to issue press releases. No other member of staff should be issuing public statements on behalf of the Council, unless specifically requested to do so by the Clerk.

Guidance for the Clerk on the Use of Council Social Media

- The Clerk should know the terms of use on third party websites, e.g. Facebook.
- No information should be published that is not already in the public domain, e.g. already available on the Parish Council's website.
- Information should be factual, fair, thorough and transparent.
- Be mindful that this information may stay in the public domain ad infinitum.
- Respect copyright laws.
- Do not publish or report on conversations that are meant to be private or internal without permission.
- Do not reference other organisations without their approval. When you do make a reference, link back to the source where possible.
- Do not publish anything that would not be acceptable in the workplace.
- Remember that you are an ambassador for the Council and be cordial at all times

Parish Councillor Personal Accounts

Even if you are not taking part in social media as a Parish Councillor, you are still an ambassador for the council on social media.

Comments made on social media are essentially made in public and so you should consider your words before posting anything relating to Parish Council business.

Councillors are not expected to be Social Media users.

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