Social Media Policy
Holton Le Clay Parish Council

Review Date April 2024

What is Social Media?

'Social media' is the term commonly given to websites and online tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way = by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. This interaction may be through computers, mobile phones and new generation technology such as i-Pads.

Examples of social media websites include:
Social networking – (e.g www.facebook.com)
Video sharing – (eg.www.youtube.com)
Blogs (e.g london2012.com/blog)
Micro-blogging (e.g www.twitter.com)
Message boards (e.g www.bbc.co.uk/dna/mbsn/home)
Wikis (e.g www.wikipedia.org)
Social bookmarking (e.g www.delicious.com)

Council Use of Social Media

Principles

- To publish information about the work of Holton Le Clay Parish Council to a wider audience.
- To avoid entering into online debates or arguments about the Council's work. Social Media must NOT be used in the recruitment process for employees or new councillors - other than for the sole purpose of placing vacancy advertisements - as this could lead to potential discrimination and privacy actions, as well as breach of data protection issues.

Approved Council Social Media

- *(Parish Council website)*
- *(Facebook page)*
- *(Chat Forum)*

Users of Council Social Media

- The Council's nominated Press Officer with the authority to issue official press releases is the clerk to the Parish Council. No other member of staff has the authority to issue public statements on behalf of the Council.

1. **Guidance for Council Officers on the use of Council Social Media**

   - Officers should be familiar with the terms of use on third party websites – eg. Facebook - and adhere to these at all times
   - No information should be published that is not already known to be in the public domain – ie. available on the Council's website, contained in minutes of meetings, stated in Council publicised policies and procedures, etc.
   - Information that is published should be factual, fair, thorough and transparent.
   - Everyone must be mindful that information published in this way may stay in the public domain indefinitely, without the opportunity for retrieval/deletion.
   - Copyright laws must be respected.
   - Conversations or reports that are meant to be private or internal must not be published without permission.
   - Other organisations should not be referenced without their approval – when referencing, link back to the original source wherever possible.
   - Do not publish anything that would be regarded in the workplace as unacceptable.
   - Staff must remember that they will be seen as ambassadors for the Council, and should always act in a responsible and socially aware manner.

2. **Third party Social Media and Individual Councillor Usage**

   Councillors need to think about whether they are acting in a private capacity, or whether any impression might be conveyed that they are acting for and on behalf of Holton Le Clay Parish Council. The Council has adopted a Code of Conduct which is binding on all members. If you use Social Media in your official capacity as a councillor, you should always be mindful of the Code, and of the seven Nolan principles applicable to holding public office – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

   Do:

   - Set appropriate privacy settings for any blog or networking site
   - Watch out for defamatory or obscene posts from others on any blog or page and remove them as soon as possible to avoid any perception that you condone such vies
   - Be aware that the higher your profile as a councillor, the more likely it is that you may be seen as acting in an official capacity when you blog or network
   - Ensure any Council facilities are used appropriate – if using a Council-provided blog site or social networking area, any posts that you make

are extremely likely to be viewed as being made in your official capacity

- Avoid publishing any information that you could only have accessed in your position as a councillor
- Be careful if making 'political' points, and avoid being specific or personal about individuals.

Don't:

- Blog in haste
- Post comments that you would not be prepared to make in writing or in face-to-face contact
- Use Council facilities for personal or political purposes

Aims and Objectives:

Social media can be used by the Town Council as an effective and measurable way to achieve resident engagement and attract publicity. The aim of this Policy is to ensure:

• Engagement with individuals and communities and successful promotion of Parish Council- based services through the use of social media

• A consistent approach is adopted and maintained in the use of social media

• That all Parish Council information remains secure and is not compromised through the use of social media

• That users operate within existing policies, guidelines and relevant legislation

• That the Parish Council's reputation is upheld and improved rather than adversely affected

• That communication by use of social media is effective, timely, appropriate and useful ensuring the Parish Council engages with a wider audience and utilises cross-promotion of other Council communication tools (e.g. Website, quarterly magazine, linking Facebook to twitter account etc.) Social media activity isn't something that stands alone, to be effective it needs to integrate as part of the general communications mix. Any planned campaigns, promotions and activities can be plugged in to social media platforms to increase reach and exposure.