

CUMNOR PARISH COUNCIL

SOCIAL & DIGITAL MEDIA POLICY

Issue History

Date of Adoption	Reference in Minute Book	Comments
07/03/2016	74/16 ii	Valid from 7 March 2016

The aim of this policy is to set out a Code of Practice to provide guidance to staff and Councillors in the use of online communications, collectively referred to as social media.

Social media is a collective term used to describe methods of publishing on the internet. The policy covers all forms of social media and social networking sites which include (but are not limited to):

- Parish Council website
- Facebook and other social networking sites
- Twitter and other micro blogging sites
- Youtube and other video clips and podcast sites
- LinkedIn
- Blogs and discussion forums
- Parish Council emails

Who does it apply to?

The principles of the policy apply to Councillors and Clerk.

The policy sits alongside relevant existing policies which need to be taken into consideration.

Council use of social media

The use of social media will not replace existing forms of communication. Notices will continue to be published on the Parish Council's noticeboards for the purpose of communicating information about the Parish Council to those who do not have access to computers/tablets, smartphones etc.

Principles

- To publish information about the 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 Parish Council social media

- Parish Council website(cumnorparishcouncil.org.uk)

The Parish Council has appointed a Webmaster to maintain and update the website.

- Parish Council emails (clerk@cumnorparishcouncil.org.uk)

The Clerk is responsible for dealing with email received. The procedure for the sending of email from the Parish Council to local residents, businesses and organisations is that they will be sent by the Clerk. Where Councillors need to communicate with local residents, businesses and organisations they should, preferably, send their email to the Clerk Council or where for reasons of expediency this is not practical the email

concerned must be copied to the Clerk. This procedure ensures that a complete and proper record of all correspondence is kept.

Guidance for using email

- Councillors are personally responsible for any online activity conducted via their published email address which is used for council business. Councillors are strongly advised to have separate council and personal email addresses and adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct.

Guidance for using social media

- Councillors using social media in an official capacity as a Councillor, should always be mindful of the Council's Code of Conduct and of the seven Nolan principles applicable to holding public office – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- Councillors should make it clear that views are their own views and not necessarily those of Council as a body with a statement such as 'The views expressed are my own and do not reflect the views of Cumnor Parish Council'.

When participating in any online communication:

- Be responsible and respectful; be direct, informative, brief and transparent.
- Always disclose your identity and affiliation to the Parish Council. Never make false or misleading statements.
- Councillors should not present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment. Be mindful of the information they post on sites and make sure personal opinions are not published as being that of the Council or bring the Council into disrepute or is contrary to the Council's Code of Conduct or any other policies.
- Keep the tone of your comments respectful and informative, never condescending or 'loud'. Use sentence case format, no capital letters or write in red to emphasis a point.
- Refrain from posting controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks. Language that may be deemed as offensive relating in particular to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age or religion or belief should not be published on any social media site.
- Avoid personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications. If Councillors/Clerk encounters a situation that threatens to become antagonistic, Councillors/Clerk should disengage from dialogue in a polite manner.
- Never use an individual's name unless you have written permission to do so.
- Permission to publish photographs or videos on social media sites should be sought from the persons or organisations in the video or photograph before being uploaded.
- Respect the privacy of other Councillors and residents.
- Do not post any information or conduct any online activity that may violate laws or regulations.

Councillors or residents who have any concerns regarding content place on social media sites should report them to the Clerk. Misuse of such sites in a manner that is contrary to this and other policies could result in action being taken.

Review date October 2018