

## Charlbury Town Council

# Social Media Policy

### Why should the Town Council have a Social Media Policy?

- To define the goals for Town Council social media activity
- To ensure that the clerk and Town Councillors are aware of the standards and processes that are in place and are using the most appropriate channels.
- To protect the Town Council's reputation from inappropriate use of social media.

The aim of this policy is to set out a Code of Practice to provide guidance to Charlbury Town Councillors, the Town Clerk and others who engage with the Town Council using social media. In the main, Town Councillors and the Town Clerk have the same legal duties online as anyone else, but failure to comply with the law may have more serious consequences. This policy covers all forms of social media and social networking sites

Social media does not replace existing forms of communication e.g. Newsletters, Noticeboards etc.

The current Code of Conduct applies to social media activity in the same way it does to other written or verbal communication. Individual Town Councillors and the Town Clerk are responsible for what they post in a Town Council capacity. Social media may be used to

- Distribute Town Council agendas, post minutes and dates of meetings
- Advertise Town Council events and activities
- Announce new information from the Town Council
- Promote links to news stories on the Charlbury TC website
- Advertise Town Council vacancies
- Share information from partner agencies such as Principal Authorities, Police, Library, Health etc.
- Post or share information from other Town Council-related community groups such as schools, sports clubs, community groups and charities
- Refer resident queries to the Clerk and all other Town Councillors. However, a response may not be possible and may require the item being put on the next available council agenda and fully discussed at a public meeting. Social Media will not be used to engage in debate.

When using social media, Town Councillors and Town Clerk must be mindful of the information they post in a Town Council capacity and keep the tone of any comments respectful and informative. Town Councillors' views posted in any capacity in advance of matters to be debated by the Town Council at a Council Meeting constitute Pre-disposition, Pre-determination or Bias and may require the individual to declare an interest at Council meetings.

The Town Council social media Moderator shall be the Clerk to the Town Council. Anyone with concerns regarding content placed on social media that denigrates Town Councillors, Town Clerk or residents should report them to the Clerk of the Town Council.

Online content should be accurate, objective, balanced and informative and must comply with the Town Council Code of Conduct. Town councillors and Town Clerk must not:

- hide their identity using false names or pseudonyms
- present personal opinions as that of the Town Council
- present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment to the Town Council
- post content that is contrary to the democratic decisions of the Town Council
- publish photographs or videos of minors without parental permission
- post any information that infringes the copyright of others
- post any information that may be deemed libellous
- post online activity that constitutes bullying or harassment
- bring the Town Council into disrepute, including through content posted in a personal capacity
- publish personal data of individuals without permission as this is a breach of Data Protection legislation and is an offence.
- Misuse of social media content that is contrary to this and other policies could result in action being taken.

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually and will include an evaluation of how effective Social Media is in communication with all residents.

Adopted 26.1.2022