



# **SCOTHERN PARISH COUNCIL**

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

**Adopted 6 March 2019**

Reviewed without change October 2019



## **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. The interaction may be through computers, mobile phones and iPads and the like.

## **Council use of Social Media**

### *Principles*

- To publish information about the work of Scothern 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

## **Users of Council Social Media**

In accordance with the Council’s adopted Communications Policy the Clerk is the nominated Press Officer and has authority to issue official press releases but only after clearance from the Chair. Only the Clerk can add reports and updates to the social media sites as a representative for the Parish Council. No Councillor can update the sites unless previously authorised as deputising for the Clerk; to cover leave or sickness.

### *Guidance for the Clerk on the use of Council Social Media*

1. The Clerk should be familiar with the terms of use on third party websites, eg Facebook; and adhere to these at all times.
2. 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 published policies and procedures etc.
3. Information that is published should be factual, fair and transparent.
4. Everyone should be mindful that information published in this way may stay in the public domain indefinitely without the opportunity for retrieval/deletion.
5. Copyright laws must be respected.
6. Conversations or reports that are meant to be private or internal must not be published without permission.
7. Other organisations should not be referenced without prior approval being sought; when referencing, link back to the original source wherever possible.
8. Do not publish anything that would be regarded in the workplace as unacceptable.
9. The Clerk must remember that they will be seen as an ambassador for the Council and should always act in a responsible and socially aware manner.

### *Third party social media and individual councillor usage*

Councillors need to consider if actions are in a private capacity or whether any impression might be conveyed that actions are for and on behalf of Scothern Parish Council. The Council has adopted a code of conduct that is binding on all members. If social media is used in an official capacity, Councillors should always be mindful of the code and of the seven Nolan principles 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 views.
- Avoid publishing any information that you could only have accessed in your position as Councillor.
- Be careful in 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.