Social Media Policy

As adopted 29/9/2022
Minute ref: 6.2, page, 45-2022.

To be reviewed September 2023

1. 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 iPads.

Examples of social media websites include:

- Social networking – (eg. www.facebook.com)

- Video sharing / Vlogs– (eg. www.youtube.com)

- Blogs (eg. london2012.com/blog)

- Micro-blogging (eg. www.twitter.com)

- Message boards (eg. www.bbc.co.uk/dna/mbsn/home)

- Wikis (eg. www.wikipedia.org)

2. Principles for Council Use of Social Media

- To publish information about the work of Ruskington 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.

3. Approved Council Social Media

- Parish Council website

- All social media platforms approved for use by Ruskington Parish Council.

4. Users of Council Social Media

- In accordance with the Council's adopted Communications Policy, clause no. 5. Media Statements; Any media statements, issued on behalf of the Parish Council, are to be issued by Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Clerk or the Deputy Clerk / Responsible Finance Officer (during the Clerk's absence), in consultation with any other Member as required. No other member of staff (other than the RFO deputising for the Parish Clerk) has the authority to issue public statements on behalf of the Council.

5. 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. those listed at bullet 2 of para 3- 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 or elsewhere as unacceptable (e.g., racist, sexist, ageist, pornographic, abusive, swearing)
   - Staff must remember that they will be seen as ambassadors for the Council, and should always act in a responsible and socially aware manner.

6. Third party Social Media and Individual Councillor and Employee Usage
   Councillors and Employees need to think about whether they are acting in a private capacity, or whether any impression might be conveyed that they are acting for or on behalf of Ruskington Parish Council. The Council has adopted a Code of Conduct which is binding on all members. Should Cllrs use Social Media in an official capacity, they 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.

7. 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 such views are condoned.
   - Ensure any Council facilities are used appropriately – if using a Council-provided blog site or social networking area, any posts are likely to be viewed as an official viewpoint.
   - Do not publish information attained in the course of Council Business.
   - Avoid making 'political' points, or derogatory comments about individuals.

8. Don't:
   - Post /Blog in haste.
   - Use Council facilities for personal or political purposes.

Confirmation that this Social Media policy is understood and the measures will be followed:
Please note: If you do not understand any part of this policy please speak to the Clerk of Council.

Name	Signature	Date