

Version Control

Review Date	Version no	Amendment
18/11/2021	1	Policy adopted
June 2024	2	Controls updated to include assistant clerk

INTRODUCTION

Social media and networking sites have become a regular part of everyday life and many people use sites such as Facebook, Instagram, NextDoor and others.

The Parish Council aims to keep members of the community updated with what is happening within the parish and local area and share important news and information. The Parish Council will make use of approved social media tools to quickly disseminate information but carefully control its use to minimise associated risks.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for officers and councillors on the use of social media.

USE OF PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS

Weston Turville Parish Council will operate social media account(s) for the promotion of activities and events and as a communication tool.

Acceptable corporate content is:

- News items and emergency information
- Good News stories
- Event listings
- Marketing campaigns
- Consultation documents
- Useful links, eg to Fix My Street

CONTROLS

An official account on any social media website will only be set up with agreement by the Parish Council.

Once approved, each account will be set up and managed by the Clerk with assistance from the Assistant Clerk. Councillors and other staff officially appointed by the Council may assist the Clerk to operate them.

No account details, passwords etc may be changed without the permission of the Clerk.

All information published on the internet must comply with the Parish Council's confidentiality policy and data protection. Any photos or videos must have appropriate permissions obtained before uploading.

Requests for content to be posted on the Council's Facebook page should be directed to the Clerk.

Any employee, Councillor or member of the public who becomes aware of social networking activity on the Council's social media pages that would be deemed distasteful should make the Parish Clerk aware as soon as possible.

During purdah, the Council will continue to publish important service announcements using social media but will monitor and will remove responses if they are overtly party political.

SOCIAL MEDIA MODERATION POLICY

The Parish Council social media is moderated reactively, the Council cannot accept responsibility for comments posted by members of the public.

The Council reserve the right to remove comments received that:

- Contain abusive, obscene, indecent or offensive language, or link to obscene or offensive material
- Contain abusive language and/or inappropriate comments directed towards an individual (be that employees, councillors or member of the public) or another organisation
- Contain swear words or other sorts of profanity
- Constitute spam or promote or advertise products.
- Are designed to cause nuisance to the page administrator or other users
- Any party political comments during purdah.
- For serious and/or persistent breaches of the above, the Council reserves the right to prevent users from posting further comments.

Comments posted and messages received on the Council's social media from members of the public are views of individuals and do not represent the views of the Parish Council.

When posting information to other local Facebook pages, comments are disabled, an email address to will be provided within the post for comments and queries to be directed to.

PERSONAL USE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Individual Councillors and staff may have their own social media accounts, but they should ensure they comply with this policy and use a 'personal view' disclaimer.

If using social media for personal purposes unrelated to your Parish Council role, you must not imply you are speaking for the Parish Council.

Avoid use of the Parish Council e-mail address, logos, or other Parish Council identification.

Make it clear that what you say is representative of your personal views only. Where possible, you should include a standard disclaimer, such as: "Statements and opinions here are my own and don't necessarily represent Weston Turville Parish Council's policies or opinions".

Comments made on the Parish Council's social media must always reflect the Council's position/decisions on a matter and in no circumstances must it be used to express personal opinion, particularly when used by a Councillor. If unsure, say nothing.

Comments of a derogatory, proprietary or libellous nature should not be made and care should be taken to avoid guesswork, exaggeration and colourful language.

Councillors should at all times present a professional image and not disclose anything of a confidential nature.

RESPONDING TO MESSAGES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

All formal requests, comments, enquiries or complaints should be emailed to the Parish Council clerk@westonturville-pc.gov.uk.

If appropriate, the Clerk will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible to all questions received via social networking sites.

The Parish Council may post replies on forums or blogs to answer queries or address factual corrections but would generally take a cautious approach before getting involved in contentious issues.

The Parish Council reserves the right to take any necessary steps to protect members of the Parish community and will delete any comments referencing the Parish Council, which are deemed abusive or offensive in anyway.