

## **ELVETHAM HEATH PARISH COUNCIL Social Media Policy**

**Adopted 21 May 2018 Minute Ref: 34/18**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to set out a code of practice and to provide guidance to Elvetham Heath Parish Council members and staff in the use of online public communications in the context of social media and the council website, particularly where this is representing the parish council and its work.

### **Definition**

Social media is the term commonly given to website and online tools that allow users to interact with each other by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. This interaction can be via computers, mobile phones and tablet devices. Examples of social media tools include: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram & blogs. With new platforms emerging regularly, this policy is not intended to apply to any specific social media platform.

The Council recognises the benefits of social media as a means of communication and uses the following social media tools: Facebook, Twitter & its website.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all councillors and staff of Elvetham Heath Parish Council

### **Code of Practice**

- A. Online and social media should be used primarily for the following purposes:
1. To share information relating to the official business of the Council;
  2. To advertise events and activities of potential interest to those who live in, work in or visit the area.
  3. To promote newsworthy stories of potential interest;
  4. To alert the public to vacancies on the council;
  5. To support local individuals or community groups by sharing information that may be of benefit of interest;
  6. To announce new information that may be of relevance in relation to the work of the council;
  7. To function as an alternative platform for residents to express their views or queries to the staff or members, although this will not be treated as being in an official capacity;
- B. When using social media:
1. Be responsible, respectful as well as informative, transparent and brief;
  2. Never make false or misleading statements;

3. Councillors must observe the Code of Conduct when corresponding in their official capacity as a councillor or giving the impression of acting in that capacity.
4. At all times, consideration should be given as to how any correspondence may affect the reputation of the Council.
5. Councillors should not present any political views & should refrain from posting controversial or inflammatory comments;
6. Avoid personal attacks, online fights or hostile arguments;
7. Be mindful of personal privacy and ensure permission is granted before publishing any photographs or videos. It will be assumed that these permissions have already been obtained if these images are shared from third party sources.
8. When using social media in your personal capacity, ensure other people are aware that you are not representing the Council.

C. Guidance:

1. Councillors and residents should note that not all communications require a response or will be responded to particularly if on a third party social media page or site. If a matter is intended to be brought officially to the Council's attention, then it should be sent by letter or email to the Council office or raised at a Council meeting;
2. The nominated moderator has the authority to remove any posts which may contain personal or inflammatory remarks, or which may be deemed inappropriate;
3. Anyone who has concerns regarding content placed on online/social media sites should report them to the Executive Officer;
4. The Communications Officer or other staff members are responsible for posting and monitoring content. He/she will act as moderator and remove any posts deemed to be inappropriate;
5. Whilst social media platforms operate 24/7, it is not expected that they will be monitored continuously.
6. Views expressed by others on the Council's social media pages are not necessarily endorsed by the Council and the council is not responsible for the accuracy of content posted by others.

**Related Policies & Notices**

- Code of Conduct
- Data Protection & Privacy Policy
- Press & Media Policy