

CLIFTON UPON DUNSMORE PARISH COUNCIL
POLICY FOR USE OF WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The aim of this policy is to set out a Code of Practice to provide guidance for Parish Councillors and the Clerk in the use of online communications, collectively referred to as social media. It is also intended for guidance for other communicating with the Parish Council.

Social media is a collective term used to describe methods of publishing on the internet. The policy covers all forms of social media and social networking sites which include (but are not limited to):

- Parish Council Website
- Facebook, Myspace and other social networking sites
- Twitter and other micro blogging sites
- Youtube and other video clips and podcast sites
- LinkedIn
- Bloggs and discussion forums
- Parish Council Emails

Use of Social Media

The website and other forms of social media will be used to enhance existing communication channels. The Clifton upon Dunsmore Parish Council Website and Facebook page intend to:

Provide information and updates regarding activities and opportunities within Clifton upon Dunsmore Parish and promote the provision of positive input and comments from residents within the parish.

The Policy

1. The Council will appoint The Parish Clerk and a Councillor as moderator(s). They will be responsible for posting and monitoring of the content ensuring it complies with the Social Media Policy. The moderator(s) will have authority to remove any posts made by third parties from our social media pages which are deemed to be of a defamatory, libel nature. Such post will also be reported to the Hosts (i.e. Facebook).

2. The Council will appoint the Parish Clerk as a nominated “Webmaster” to maintain and update the Parish Council Website.

The website may be used to –

- Post minutes and dates of meetings
- Advertise events and activities
- Provide good news stories
- Advertise Staff and Councillor Vacancies
- Retweet or ‘share’ information from partners i.e. Police, Library and Health etc.
- Announce new information.

- Post or Share information from other Parish related community and ‘not for profit’ groups/clubs/associations/bodies e.g. Schools, sports clubs and community groups
- Refer resident queries to the clerk and all other councillors
- **Facebook** will be used to support the website information above.
- **Emails** will be used to distribute information of council business.

3. Guidance for Councillors using the Council’s Social Media Presence

Individual Parish councillors are responsible for what they post. Councillors are personally responsible for any online activity conducted via their published e-mail address which is used for council business. Councillors are strongly advised to have separate council and personal email addresses, and adhere to **The Members’ Code of Conduct**.

When participating in any online communication;

- Be responsible and respectful; be direct, informative, brief and transparent.
 - Always disclose your identity and affiliation to the Parish Council. Never make false or misleading statements.
 - Parish Councillors should not present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment. All Parish Councillors need to be mindful of the information they post on sites and make sure personal opinions are not published as being that of the Council or bring the Council into disrepute or is contrary to the Council’s Code of Conduct or any other Policies.
 - Keep the tone of your comments respectful and informative, never condescending or “loud.” Use sentence case format, not capital letters, or write in red to emphasis points.
 - Never post controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks. Language that may be deemed as offensive relating in particular to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age or religion or belief should not be published on any social media site.
 - Avoid personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications.
 - Never use an individual’s name unless you have written permission to do so.
 - Permission to publish photographs or videos on social media sites should be sought from the persons or organisations in the video or photograph before being uploaded.
 - Respect the privacy of other councillors and residents.
 - Do not post any information or conduct any online activity that may violate laws or regulations.
4. Residents and Councillors should note that not all communication requires a response.
- There will not be immediate responses to communications as they may be discussed by the Parish Council and all responses will be agreed by the Parish Council.
 - The Parish Clerk and other moderator will be responsible for all final published responses.

- c) If a matter needs further consideration it may be raised at either the open forum or as a full agenda item for consideration by a quorum of Councillors. Again the poster shall be informed via the page or direct message that this is the case.
 - d) If a moderator feels unable to answer a post for example of a contentious nature this shall be referred to the Parish Clerk. The poster will be informed by way of response to this fact and also be invited to correspond with the Parish Clerk directly.
 - e) Some communication from residents and other third parties may be required to be discussed at a Parish Council meeting. When this is necessary the item will be placed on the next available agenda. Any response will then be included in the minutes of the meeting.
 - f) The Parish Council are not responsible for the accuracy of content posted by any subscriber in any forum; opinions expressed in comments on Clifton upon Dunsmore Parish Councils social media forums do not necessarily represent those of Clifton upon Dunsmore Parish Council.
 - g) All comments, once posted, become the property of Clifton upon Dunsmore Parish Council and we reserve the right to reproduce, distribute, publish, display or edit. Derivative work can also be created from such postings or content, and used for any purpose, in any form and on any other media.
 - h) Clifton upon Dunsmore Parish Council assumes no responsibility or liability for any injury, loss or damage incurred as a result of any use or reliance upon the information and material contained within or downloaded from these websites.
 - i) The presence of any advertisement on Facebook is not an endorsement of the authenticity or quality of the goods, services or website and Clifton upon Dunsmore Parish Council will not be held responsible for any claims arising in that respect.
 - j) Comments should not advertise commercial products or services.
5. The nominated moderators shall remove any negative posts which may contain personal and inflammatory remarks, libellous or defamatory information without further comment or notification.
- a) Spell and grammar check everything.
 - b) Correct any errors promptly.
6. Councillors or parishioners who have any concerns regarding content placed on social media sites should report them to the Parish Clerk. Misuse of such sites in a manner that is contrary to this and other policies could result in action being taken.
7. The Policy will be reviewed annually.

By choosing to comment and/or utilise any Clifton upon Dunsmore Parish Council Website and Social Media, users are deemed to agree to this policy.

Adopted by Clifton upon Dunsmore Parish Council on 7 September 2015
Next review January 2017