



9 Warmstone Close, Waddesdon, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP18 0NR
Tel: 01296 651800 email: clerk@waddesdonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Social Media Policy

Introduction

Some of the most popular social media sites today are Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The format and level of interaction vary greatly from one to another. Whenever Parish Council representatives use such sites, they are advised to familiarise themselves with the guidance that is set out in this policy. It is important that social media sites are used effectively as part of a wider communications mix, and that their use does not expose the Council to security risks, or the risk of reputational damage.

As with any online activity, there are risks associated with it. The following types of risk have been associated with social media:

- Virus or malware (malicious software) infection from infected sites
- Disclosure of confidential information
- Damage to the standing or reputation of the Council
- Social engineering attacks (the act of manipulating people into disclosing confidential material or carrying out certain actions. This is often carried out by individuals fraudulently claiming to be a business or a client)
- Civil or criminal action related to breaches of legislation.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- The Parish Council is not exposed to legal or governance risk
- The reputation of the Council is not adversely affected
- People are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking sites is legitimately representative of Waddesdon Parish Council.

The following guidelines will apply to online participation, and will set out the standards of behaviour expected of a representative of Waddesdon Parish Council.

Principles for Parish Council use of Social Media

To publish information about the work of Waddesdon Parish Council.

To avoid entering into online debates or arguments about the Parish Council's work.

Approved Parish Council Social Media

The Parish Council has approved the use of Facebook and the Parish Council's website to promote the work of the Parish Council and to communicate approved messages by the Clerk.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WaddesdonParishCouncilClerk/>

Website: <http://waddesdonparishcouncil.gov.uk/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/WaddesdonPC>

Users of Parish Council Social Media

The Clerk is the Council's nominated Press Officer with the authority to issue official press releases once they have been approved by the Chairman.

The Parish Council has appointed Cllrs Irwin and Walker to post messages on to our Facebook page that have been approved by the Chairman and/or the Clerk.

Guidance for Parish Councillors on the use of Parish Council Social Media

- Councillors and Officers should be familiar with the terms of use on third party websites and adhere to these at all times.
- No information should be published that is not already known to be in the public domain (eg available on the Parish Council's website or published in Minutes) without the prior approval of the Chairman or Clerk.
- 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 as unacceptable.
- Councillors and Officers must remember that they will be seen as ambassadors for the Parish Council, and should always act in a responsible and socially aware manner.

Third Party Social Media and Individual Councillor Usage

Councillors and officers need to think about whether they are acting in a private capacity, or whether any impression might be conveyed that they are acting for and on behalf of Waddesdon Parish Council. The Council has adopted a Code of Conduct which is binding on all members. If you use Social Media in your official capacity as a Councillor or Officer, you 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.

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.
- Be aware that the higher your profile as a Councillor, the more likely it is that you may be seen as acting in an official capacity when you blog or network.
- Ensure any Parish Council facilities are used, any posts that you make are extremely likely to be viewed as being made in your official capacity.
- Avoid publishing any information that you could only have accessed in your position as Parish Councillor or Officer.
- Be careful if 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 face-to-face contact.
- Use Parish Council facilities for personal or political purposes.

This statement will be reviewed annually.

