

UPTON & NORTH ELMSALL PARISH COUNCIL

SOCIAL MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Upton & North Elmsall Parish Council uses social media and digital communications, and establishes clear expectations for Councillors and staff when engaging online.

The policy aims to:

- Ensure accurate, consistent and timely communication with residents
- Protect the Council's reputation
- Maintain proper governance and decision-making processes
- Clarify the distinction between official Council communications and individual views

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- The Parish Council's official Facebook page and website
- Any future social media platforms operated by the Council
- All Councillors and staff when using social media in a Council-related context

3. Official Council Communications

3.1. Management of Official Channels

The Parish Council's official Facebook page and website are the primary platforms for communicating Council information.

The Clerk is responsible for:

- Publishing information on behalf of the Council
- Ensuring content is accurate, appropriate and lawful
- Maintaining consistency in messaging

No other individual is authorised to publish official Council information unless expressly delegated by the Clerk or resolved by Council.

3.2. What is Published

The official channels will be used to share:

- Agendas, minutes and meeting information
- Approved projects, initiatives and decisions
- Community information and events (where appropriate)
- Public notices and statutory information

3.3. Approval of Content

Only information that:

- Has been formally resolved by Council, or
- Falls within the Clerk's delegated authority

may be published as official Council communication.

Matters discussed informally or outside of a properly convened meeting must not be presented as Council decisions.

3.4. Tone and Standards

All communications will:

- Be factual, balanced and non-political
- Reflect the corporate position of the Council
- Avoid personal opinions or attribution to individual Councillors

4. **Councillor and Staff Use of Social Media**

This section is intended to support Councillors and staff in maintaining clear and consistent communication with residents.

4.1. General Principles

Councillors and staff must:

- Uphold the Nolan Principles of Public Life
- Act respectfully and professionally at all times
- Be mindful that they may be perceived as representing the Council

4.2. Sharing Council Information

Councillors are encouraged to support Council communications by:

- Sharing posts from the official Parish Council page
- Promoting approved Council initiatives

4.3. Representing the Council

Councillors and staff must ensure that any reference to the Parish Council on social media is accurate and does not give the impression that an individual is speaking or acting on behalf of the Council unless this has been formally agreed.

To support this:

- Council decisions, projects and initiatives should only be communicated once they have been formally agreed and shared via the Council's official communication channels
- Councillors and staff should avoid presenting individual actions or views as those of the Council as a whole
- Care should be taken to ensure that residents are not unintentionally misled about the status of any Council matter

Where there is any uncertainty, Councillors should refer queries to the Clerk before posting.

4.4. Individual Capacity

Councillors may:

- Express personal opinions on social media
- Engage with residents

However, they must:

- Make it clear they are speaking in a personal capacity
- Avoid bringing the Council into disrepute

5. Accuracy and Misinformation

Where inaccurate or misleading information relating to the Council is shared:

- The Clerk will determine whether a corrective statement is required
- Councillors should not attempt to issue corrections on behalf of the Council unless authorised

6. Moderation of Official Pages

The Parish Council's social media platforms are intended to provide information and updates and to support constructive engagement with residents.

Users are expected to:

- Be respectful and considerate towards others
- Avoid abusive, offensive or discriminatory language
- Keep comments relevant to the topic

The Parish Council reserves the right to remove any content that includes:

- Obscene, racist or offensive material
- Personal attacks, harassment or threatening behaviour
- Potentially defamatory or misleading statements
- Content that breaches copyright or other legal requirements
- Personal or confidential information shared without consent
- Spam, commercial promotions or irrelevant links

Repeated breaches may result in users being blocked from the page.

Comments made by members of the public do not represent the views of the Parish Council.

The Council's social media platforms are not monitored continuously, and messages or comments submitted via social media will not be treated as formal contact with the Council. Residents should use the official contact details on the Council's website for formal enquiries.

The Parish Council reserves the right to update this moderation policy at any time.

7. Breaches of this Policy

Failure to comply with this policy may result in:

- Referral to the Monitoring Officer (where applicable)
- Consideration under the Councillor Code of Conduct
- Internal action where appropriate

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically and may be updated by resolution of the Council.