

SOCIAL MEDIA PROTOCOL

PROTOCOL STATEMENT

This policy is intended to aid councillors of Haselbury Plucknett Parish Council, (HPPC) to make appropriate decisions about the use of social media platforms, including webpages, Facebook, Instagram.

The Council will support the use of social media for the purposes of:-

- Providing and exchanging information about services
- Supporting local democracy
- Supporting community cohesion and neighbourliness.
- Creating internal communications.

This policy outlines the standards the Council requires all councillors to observe, when using social media. It does not form part of any contract and may be amended at any time.

Currently the social media platforms being used include a webpage, Facebook and Instagram, but other platforms may be added as appropriate as the parish seeks to expand the services it delivers. In this case the Social Media Policy will be updated to reflect the new arrangements.

It is understood that although social media is an effective channel for its communications, it should at no time replace the more traditional forms of communication that already exist for the dissemination of parish council news. It is to run in conjunction with, and not as an alternative to, established contact with the Haselbury Plucknett village community.

It is imperative that councillors are mindful that interaction via social media platforms means it is in effect published and in the public domain. Online content should therefore be objective, balanced, informed and accurate.

Rules for using social media

- Councillors must not make any derogatory, discriminatory, defamatory or offensive comments about the council, village community or agencies connected or working for the village community.
- GDPR must be followed. Posts must not contain anyone's personal information other than necessary basic contact details. (These details must have the permission of all involved.)
- If councillors blog or tweet personally and not in their role as a councillor, they must not act, claim to act or give the impression that they are acting as a representative of the Council.
- The Council will appoint a nominated person as moderator, who will be responsible for posting and monitoring of the content on relevant social media platforms and ensure compliance with the Social Media Policy.

Social Media Platforms may be used to: -

- Post notices and minutes of HPPC meetings.
- Advertise events and activities.
- Post good news stories.
- Advertise vacancies.
- Retweet or 'share' information from partners i.e., Police, district council etc.
- Announce new information appropriate to HPPC.
- Post of share information promoting bodies for community benefit such as sports clubs and community groups.
- Post other items as HPPC see fit.
- Facebook and/or Instagram etc. may be used to support the website and its information as above.

It is important that HPPC members understand that:

- Individual parish councillors are responsible for what they post.
- All social media sites in use should be checked on a regular basis to ensure that relevant security settings are in place.
- Councillors should not present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment.
- Councillors should be mindful of the information posted on sites and make sure personal opinions are not published as being that of the Council.
- Councillors must refrain from posting controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks. Language that may be deemed as offensive relating in particular to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age, religion or belief should not be published on any social media site.
- It is imperative that personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications are avoided. To this end, questions posed to councillors publicly online may be acknowledged but if the query demands a more detailed discussion, or is of a contentious nature, then the appropriate channels for further debate should be highlighted.
- They should never name an individual third party unless you have written permission to do so.
- Permission should always be sought to publish original photographs or video from the persons or organisations in the video or photographs before they are uploaded.
- It is the councillor's individual responsibility to check any necessary parental permission before photos of children are used.
- Respecting the privacy of other councillors and residents is paramount.
- Councillors should never post any information or conduct any online activity that may violate laws or regulations such as libel and copyright.
- Each councillor is responsible for checking spelling and grammar on each post.
- Reports of any concerns regarding content placed on social media sites should be reported to the Clerk for referral to the Council as required.