

Kettlethorpe Parish Council Social Media Policy

1. Purpose

This policy provides guidance on the appropriate use of social media by Parish Councillors and staff, both in an official capacity and personally, to protect the reputation of the Council and ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Parish Councillors and employees.
- All forms of social media including, but not limited to, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogs, forums, and messaging platforms.

3. Official Use of Social Media

3.1 Posting on Behalf of the Parish Council

- No Parish Councillor may post content on behalf of the Parish Council without prior agreement of the full Council.
- Such agreement must be formally minuted at a Council meeting.
- Posts must reflect the democratic decisions of the Council and not individual opinions.
- The Clerk may post official updates as delegated by the Council.

3.2 Election Periods

- During the pre-election period (Purdah), all social media activity must comply with electoral regulations.
- Councillors must not use Council platforms for campaigning or political promotion.

4. Personal Use of Social Media

Parish Councillors are expected to uphold the standards of public office even when using social media in a personal capacity.

4.1 Responsibilities

- Avoid presenting personal views as those of the Council.
- Not use the title "Cllr" or "Councillor" on personal accounts unless clearly stating that views are personal.
- Refrain from posting content that could bring the Council into disrepute.
- Respect confidentiality and avoid sharing sensitive or private Council information.
- Not engage in online arguments, bullying, harassment, or discriminatory language.
- Avoid commenting on matters that may later be subject to Council decision, to prevent predetermination under the Localism Act 2011.

4.2 Good Practice

- Be respectful, factual, and constructive.
- Avoid inflammatory topics such as religion or party politics.
- Direct complaints or queries to the Clerk or appropriate Council channels.
- Consider privacy settings and the public nature of online platforms.

5. Breaches and Complaints

- Allegations of misuse will be investigated by the Clerk or Chair.
- Complaints about Councillor conduct may be referred to the Monitoring Officer.
- Staff breaches will be handled under the Council's disciplinary procedures.

6. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation or Council operations.