



## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY v 1.1

**Adopted:** February 2016

**Last Approved Review Date:** May 2026

Next Review Date May 2028

### POLICY STATEMENT

Clophill Parish Council (the Council) is committed to making the best use of all available technology and innovation to improve the way we communicate and engage with parishioners and members of the public.

This policy is intended to help all council members make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as blogs, wikis, social networking websites, forums, message boards, podcasts, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and any other form of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate with each other or to share data in a public forum.

### SCOPE

Councillors or Members are permitted to post material on a social media website in our name and on our behalf.

This includes any social media page or post that bears the name/logo of the Council (and any other associated pages that refer to the Council).

This policy applies to all councillors and co-opted members who post material in relation to the Council, **including on their own personal accounts**.

Councillors or Members refers to all individuals associated with or have regular interaction with the Council through its committees and have signed a declaration agreeing to abide by the Councils policies.

### POLICY AIM

This policy aims to minimise the risks that come with the use of any new technology and consideration of the needs of vulnerable people.

To avoid major mistakes which could result in reputational, legal and ethical issues, and misuse/abuse of a well-functioning social media relationship, it is important that we manage any risks through a common sense approach and framework as well as proactively monitoring the development of such applications.

This policy encompasses social media networks for the Council, and any other such projects that the Council may deliver/ are associated with from time to time.

## POLICY

### *Professional Use of Social Media Websites*

1. Where the Council encourages councillors and members to make use of appropriate websites as part of their work, it is recognised that it is an important part of how the Council communicates and engages with its audience. The Council 'communications team' will advise councillors on appropriate and inappropriate use.
2. All council members who have been permitted by the Council 'communications team', may contribute to the Council social media networks and/or any other social media networks associated with the Council.
3. Be aware of the specific social media channels and etiquette and understand the views and feelings of the target community
4. Ensure that topics discussed on social media websites are not inflammatory e.g. party-political and religion
5. Ensure all material published is respectful of all individuals and the village and/or specific social media site
6. Ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading
7. Any communications that councillors and co-opted members make in a professional capacity through social media must **not**:
  - breach any confidentiality guidelines
  - give away personal information (e.g. contact details) of a colleague or anyone associated with the Council
  - disclose any confidential information in relation to the Council
  - publish any material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, homophobic, inflammatory or is unlawful
  - post images that are discriminatory or offensive or link to such content
  - use social media to bully another individual
  - spend an excessive amount of time using social media allowing it to interfere with their other duties
8. Use the Council's branding wherever appropriate/applicable
9. All council members must be aware that while contributing to the Council's social media activities, they are representing the Council and the village. All councillors and co-opted members must adhere to the following safeguards:
  - Making sure that the communication has a purpose and a benefit for the Council.
  - Obtaining guidance from the Council 'communications team' before embarking on a public campaign using social media

### *Personal Use of Social Media Websites*

10. The Council recognises that many councillors or members make use of social media in a personal capacity. While they are not acting on behalf of the Council (as per standing orders), councillors or members must be aware that they can still cause damage to the Council if they are recognised as being a part of the Council.
11. Councillors or members are allowed to say that they are part of the Council, which recognises that it is natural for personnel to want to discuss their work on social media websites, but they must do so in a professional and non-conflicting manner
12. Councillors and members must never use their own personal social media accounts to bring the Council into disrepute by:
  - Being critical and/or making negative or derogatory remarks about the Council or anyone associated with the council.
  - Making defamatory remarks about individuals or other organisations or groups
  - Posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content
13. If council members discuss their council work on social media websites, they should include on their profile a statement such as: "The views I express here are mine and do not reflect the views of the Council"

### IMPLEMENTATION

Overall responsibility for policy implementation and review rests with the the Council 'communications team', however, all councillors and members are obliged to adhere to the policy at all times, to protect the privacy, confidentiality and interests of the Council, and support the implementation of the policy. The Council 'communications team' will also give all new councillors or members a copy of this policy on induction.

It is the responsibility of the Council 'communications team' to ensure that all councillors and co-opted members adhere to this policy.

### NON - COMPLIANCE

All councillors and co-opted members are expected to comply with this policy. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken by the Chair of the Council.

### REVIEW

The fast changing nature of social media websites means that this policy should be reviewed on an annual basis.

**Adopted February 2016.**

**Last Approved Review Date 27/07/23**