FULL SUTTON & SKIRPENBECK PARISH COUNCIL

Social Media Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

This Policy advises on the use of social media.

a. Social media is the term for online tools, websites and interactive media that enable users to interact with each other by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests.
b. For the purposes of this policy, the term "social media" covers sites and applications including Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, LinkedIn, blogs, and any similar sites. It also includes comments on online articles.
c. An overview of the main types of social media can be found at Appendix 1 at the end of this guideline.

2. **SCOPE OF THESE GUIDELINES**

a. This policy covers all Councillors and Council staff. It should be considered in conjunction with the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors.
b. It relates to all use of media, especially where the author claims, or appears to claim, official authorisation.

3. RISKS TO BE AWARE OF

The following risks have been identified with the use of media:

a. Disclosure of information confidential to the Council.
b. Unauthorised attribution, or implication, of personal views to the Council.
c. Allegations of bullying or witch-hunting.
d. Civil or criminal action relating to breaches of legislation.
e. Breach of safeguarding through the use of images or personal details leading to the exploitation of vulnerable individuals.

4. **KEY POINTS**

a. In the first instance, the Clerk will be responsible for monitoring and advising on the use of any social media or websites set up by or for the Council as a corporate body but final authority for use of the corporate facility belongs to the Full Council.
b. Where a Councillor or Council staff member is identified as such, it should be clearly stated that any opinions expressed are those of the individual and may not represent the views of the Council.
c. The Council's name should not be used on any personal account or website unrelated to or not representative of the Council's official position. If in doubt, contact the Clerk.
d. Wherever possible, a Councillor should make clear whether they are an authorised representative of the Council.
e. Everyone is responsible for the content which they publish on any media. Publishing an untrue statement about a person which is damaging to their reputation may amount to libel. You must comply with the Equality Act 2010, and associated legislation and therefore must not publish anything sexist, racist, ageist, homophobic or anti-faith.
f. Full guidance for election candidates can be found at www.electoralcommission.org.uk.

g. Councillors and staff must not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activity on behalf of the Council unless they are authorised to do so by the Chairman, the Clerk, the Full Council or the appropriate sub-committee with delegated authority.
h. Councillors and staff must handle any personal or sensitive information in line with the Council's data protection policies.
i. Councillors and staff must be confident of the nature of the information they publish.
j. Councillors and staff must not publish or report on meetings which are private or internal or publish exempt committee reports or private papers.
k. Councillors and staff must not use copyright images without appropriate permission.
l. Councillors and staff must attribute information shared to the source (i.e. via web link).
m. Councillors and staff must respect fair-use and financial disclosure laws.
n. Councillors and staff must not use the Council's social media accounts to promote personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns, whether or not related to the function of the Council

APPENDIX 1

EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL MEDIA
The types and numbers of social media tools are constantly growing and this policy is intended to cover all emerging brands of social media account as well as those listed below.

Facebook: A website and accompanying mobile application on which users create a profile or timeline for themselves where they send and receive requests from "friends" which link their accounts, enabling them to share photos, information and common interests. Accounts can be set to "private" which prevents anyone but a user's approved friends seeing the content.

Blogs: Short for "weblog", this is an online diary and can take the form of a personal website created from scratch and designed by the user, or a template hosted on a site such as Blogger, WordPress or Blogs Today. It is effectively an online diary which can be themed or personal, surrounding an individual's interests or opinions.

Twitter: A micro blogging site where users communicate in 140-character statements, including images and links to websites if required. Unlike Facebook (which is essentially private unless you grant access to a 'friend'), Twitter accounts are generally public unless restrictions are placed by the user to make them private. Users attract followers, who do not require permission to read a user's 'tweets' (the name of the messages) unless they are blocked. It can be compared with sending a text message to a virtual message board. Messages can be further shared by 're-tweeting' and public messages exchanged using the "@" symbol and a user's Twitter name or 'handle'.

YouTube: A video-sharing website, where users can view and upload their own videos

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