



PRESS & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

July 2021

This Policy is intended to help Councillors and Council staff make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as emails, blogs, wikis, social networking websites, podcasts, forums, message boards or comments on web-articles such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and other social media websites.

This Policy supplements, and should be read in conjunction with, all other policies and procedures adopted by the Council, such as the Equality and Diversity Policy, Data Protection and Information Security Policy, Disciplinary Procedure, Code of Conduct and such like.

This Policy does not form part of any contract of employment. It will be reviewed annually and may be amended at any time. Councillors and Council employees will be informed of any amendments.

Bungay Town Council will use social media for the purposes of:

- Communicating with our local community
- Supporting local democracy
- Providing and exchanging information about the Council's work and plans
- Gathering the views of local people
- Promoting local events
- Supporting community cohesion, neighbourliness and resilience

WHO IS COVERED BY THE POLICY?

The Policy covers all individuals working at all levels within the Council, including all elected and co-opted councillors, the Clerk to the Council, Assistant Clerk and all other employees and volunteers (collectively referred to as 'staff' in this policy).

EXTERNAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The Town Clerk and the Mayor are the only people who can speak on behalf of the council.

The Town Clerk is the only person who can write on behalf of the Council.

Councillors may be quoted, but this will be through these representatives.

The only exception is if Councillors are working on specific projects which may necessitate an email exchange with outside organisations. This email exchange must be through the official email system.

GUIDELINES FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Posts must not contain anyone's personal information other than necessary basic contact details.

If staff or 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. They should not include web links to official Council websites as this may give or reinforce the impression that they are representing the Council.

All staff and Councillors must ensure that they use Council facilities appropriately. If using a Council-provided website, blog site or social networking area, any posts made will be viewed as made in an official capacity.

Employees and Councillors must bear in mind that inappropriate conduct can still attract adverse publicity, even when the code does not apply. It must be remembered that communication on the internet is permanent and public.

When communicating in a 'private' group, it should be ensured that the Council would be content with the statement should it be made public.

BREACHES OF THE POLICY

Serious breaches of this policy may be dealt with under the Employee Disciplinary Procedure. The Council may take disciplinary action in respect of comments by an employee which are unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, obscene or profane. Breaches of the policy by volunteers (including comments which are abusive in terms of race, gender or sexual orientation) may result in the Council no longer using their services.

MONITORING OFFICER

The Council will appoint a nominated person as moderator who will be responsible for the monitoring of content on Council pages and ensure compliance with the Social Media Policy. The moderator will have authority to remove any posts from the Council's

social media pages if they are deemed to be inflammatory or of a defamatory or libellous nature.

The website must meet the legal requirements of Bungay Town Council. Other content will be appropriate for residents and visitors regarding information for the town.

Approved:

Date

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