

WEST RAINTON & LEAMSIDE PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT FACEBOOK POLICY

1. Introduction

Social media provides the Council with the opportunity to communicate to a wide audience instantaneously on a range of subjects relating to its activities, providing updates, news, information including relevant information from other sources. It also provides an opportunity to communicate with the younger age group, the business community and hopefully the harder to reach groups.

2. Purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is set out how the Parish Council intends to use the social media platform Facebook to supplement existing methods of how it communicates with the local community.

3. Definition of Social Media

Social media is a term for websites based on user participation and user-generated content. They include social networking sites and other sites that are centred on user interaction.

Social media has the following characteristics:

- Covers a wide variety of formats, including text, video, photographs, audio;
- Allows messages to flow between many different types of devices; PCs, phones and tablets;
- Involves different levels of engagement by participants who can create, comment or just view information;
- Speeds and broadens the flow of information;
- Allows communication to take place in real time or intermittently.

4. Aims and Objectives

Social media can be used by the Council as an effective and measurable way to achieve resident engagement and attract publicity.

The aim of this Policy is to ensure:

- Engagement with individuals and communities and successful promotion of Council-based services and activities through the use of Facebook;
- That communication by use of Facebook is effective, timely, appropriate, useful, engages with a wider audience and utilises cross-promotion of the Council's Website which is the principal platform for communicating and publishing information about the Council and its activities.
- A consistent approach is adopted and maintained in its use;

- That Council information remains secure and is not compromised through the use of its Facebook Account;
- That only authorised users operate within existing Policies, guidelines and relevant Legislation;
- That the Council's reputation is upheld and improved rather than adversely affected;

5. Responsibilities

The Parish Clerk is the designated "Council" owner of the Council's Facebook Account. No account details may be changed without the permission of the Clerk. Only information regarding the Parish Council or deemed relevant to the Parish of West Rainton & Leamside by the Parish Clerk will be uploaded and it is intended that all posts will be for information only and will not have the option to be commented on.

The Clerk is the only authorised person to operate the Facebook account and will operate the account in accordance with the following good practice guidelines for Parish Councils' use of social media:

- *Post only what you want the world to see. It is not like posting something on your website or blog and then realising that a story or photo should be taken down. On social media networking sites, once you post something it may continue to be available, even after it is removed from the site;*
- *Do not disclose confidential matters or criticise Council Policies, personnel or contractors;*
- *Do not post images that include young people without parental permission;*
- *Do not use commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary or libellous. Exercise caution with regards to exaggeration, colourful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted material, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterisations;*
- *To reduce security risks, do not install any external applications that work with the social networking site. Examples of these sites are calendar programs and games;*
- *Maintain updated anti-virus and malware protection to avoid infections of spyware and adware that social networking sites might place on your computer;*
- *Be careful not to fall for phishing scams that arrive via email or on your wall, providing a link for you to click, leading to fake login pages;*
- *If you find information on the social networking site that falls under the mandatory reporting guidelines then you must report it as required by law.*

6 Monitoring and Review of this Policy

The Clerk shall be responsible for reviewing this policy annually to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice. Any proposed amendments to this policy following review must be approved by the full Parish Council.

29th July 2021

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