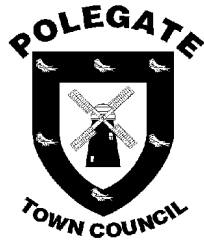


Polegate Town Council



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Policy Number 25		
Issue No.	Date completed	Details of amendments
1	23/02/2015	Adopted
2	28/09/2015	For full council review
3	28/9/2015	Adopted revised version
4	23.05.16	For adoption at Annual Stat Meeting
5	22.05.17	Adopted at Annual Stat Meeting
6	21.5.18	Adopted at Annual Stat Meeting
7	20.5.19	For review and adoption at annual stat meeting



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

General Statement

The Town Council recognises that Social Media – a term encompassing social networking sites, video sharing, blogging, micro-blogging and message boards – can be a useful method for communication between the Council, its customers and other bodies. This Policy instructs Council staff and Councillors in the appropriate use of social media.

Policy

1. All members of staff and Councillors are required to read and to comply with the conditions of the policy in respect of the way in which social media are used.
2. Except as resolved in Council, no member of staff is to set up a profile that represents or purports to represent the Council on any social networking site (for example, *Facebook*, *Twitter*), nor must any member of staff set up any additional profile(s) on such a site to which the Council already subscribes without the requisite authority.
3. The Town Clerk will appoint a single, 'Named Person' to be responsible for maintaining the Council's profile on the relevant social media site. The Named Person will be required to ensure that all details relating to the profile are kept up-to-date and that any content on the site is fresh and relevant. Other members of staff may assist the Named Person at the Town Clerk's discretion.
4. The Named Person is expected to limit the use of social media sites to the provision of information to the Council's customers. Such use would include:
 - Announcing dates of forthcoming meetings
 - Supplying links to the Council's website to enable access to minutes of meetings

- Providing information on local events, Council initiatives and achievements
- Advising on maintenance work due to be carried out.

There is no objection to the Named Person engaging in everyday pleasantries with other users of the social media site, provided such social intercourse does not involve or lead to any of the activities listed at (6) below.

5. On sites that allow the user to become a 'friend' or 'follower' of other users of the site, the Named Person shall have the discretion to follow individuals, commercial organisations, public bodies (e.g. police) or other groups (e.g. local societies) that may be of interest to the Council, or are relevant to the Council's activities. As far as possible, the Named Person should avoid following or befriending users or organisations that hold, or appear to hold, extreme views or opinions, as this might suggest to third parties that the Council endorses the views held by those other users or organisations.
6. The Named Person is not to engage in any of the following activities on any social networking or social media site that is representative of the Council:
 - Sending or displaying messages or images that are grossly offensive, racist, sexist or homophobic, or intentionally forwarding such messages or images as have been received from other users of the site.
 - Using obscene language or images
 - Publishing anything that the Council has deemed Confidential
 - Publishing anything that purports to be the Council's opinion upon a particular matter (unless authorised)
 - Violating copyright laws
 - Using others' passwords and identities (unless authorised)
 - Engaging in political debate or exhibiting political partisanship
 - Using the Council's profile to promote commercial activities (unless authorised)
 - Using the Council's profile for illegal activities
 - Any other activity that could be regarded as deliberate misuse of the Council's profile on the site

Any member of staff found engaging in any of the above activities may face disciplinary action. In certain instances the

matter will be considered to be gross misconduct. Any Councillor engaging in any of the above activities may be in breach of their Code of Conduct.

7. If, during the course of using a social networking or social media site, the Named Person receives any unsolicited message or image that appears to be grossly offensive, racist, sexist or homophobic, s/he is responsible for drawing this to the attention of the Town Clerk at the earliest opportunity. The Named Person is not to make any direct reply to the sender of the message or image.
8. The Council cannot control and is not responsible for the accuracy or content of information on other websites. For this reason the Named Person must be circumspect when using the Council's profile to supply links to other websites or users. Where appropriate a disclaimer should be used.

Nothing in this policy prevents Councillors from having their own profiles on social media sites, nor from engaging in political debate or exhibiting political partisanship, provided that there is an indication on the Councillor's profile page that all views expressed are his or her own and do not represent the views of the Council.

Any concerns on the policy must be raised with the Town Clerk or the Town Mayor (as appropriate) in the first instance and will be resolved, if necessary, by the Personnel Committee or the Town Council.

It was resolved on 23rd February 2015 to adopt this policy and to presume this is a working document as social media develops amendments may need to be made.

It was also requested that the clerk investigate the County Council social media policies with a view to adopting similar policy statements in the future.