



Loddon Town Council

The Old School | Church Plain | Loddon | NR14 6EX

www.loddontowncouncil.gov.uk | 01508 522 020

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The aim of this policy is to outline the terms agreed by Loddon Town Council on their representation online, specifically on communication channels referred to as social media.

The inception of a digital age has changed the expectations of the public and their engagement with organisations. The community wishes to be able to communicate with council online and there is a recognised need for council to be represented on social media sites.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

All employees and members are always expected to comply with this policy to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of our council.

Breaches of this policy by employees may be dealt with by the Council's disciplinary procedures and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.

The policy will cover activity including (but not restricted to):

- Loddon Town Council owned and run websites
- Town Council Facebook accounts
- Town Council Twitter accounts

USE OF TOWN COUNCIL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

The council will use social media for the following activities:

- Awareness of incidents or planned works that may affect the village or surrounding area.
- Promotion of Council activities including meetings, consultations, and projects.
- Information about Town Council assets.
- Promotion of Loddon Community Centre including events.
- Responding to comments made by members of the public where appropriate.

Loddon Town Council hereby agrees that:

- Only agreed personnel may represent council under their social media guise (Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer); overseen by a designated Councillor.
- Representation on behalf of the Council may only come from an official Town Council account, and not from an individual's personal account.
- All published correspondence will follow council's agreed Equal Opportunities policy.
- Personal information will be handled in accordance with current Data Protection laws.
- No political bias will be demonstrated.
- No personal opinions will be expressed via Council accounts.
- Copyright and libel laws will always be upheld.
- Social media channels will be updated as soon as is reasonably possible.
- The right is reserved to edit and/or delete any correspondence purporting to council which is deemed to be offensive, inappropriate, factually incorrect or in any other way derogatory.

- No photographs or videos will be uploaded without the express permission of any person/s featured.

Rules for the use of Social Media are attached at Appendix 1.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY TOWN COUNCILLORS

Loddon Town Council encourages diversity within the council and accepts that all councillors have different views that they may like to express on social media via personal accounts.

All Town councillors are bound by the Code of Conduct, and this extends to use of personal social media accounts. The principals of the code of conduct are as follows:

- i. selflessness,
- ii. integrity,
- iii. objectivity,
- iv. accountability,
- v. openness,
- vi. honesty, and
- vii. leadership.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

We will establish appropriate and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of our social media policy. The effectiveness of the social media policy will be reviewed annually, and remedial action taken, as necessary.

Where a matter is raised on social media which requires fuller investigation or response by the Council, the writer will be informed that this will be raised at the next meeting and will be invited to engage with the Council to inform that discussion.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

The council has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.

The Clerk is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for changes to minimise risks to our work. All employees, volunteers and members should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it.

Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to the Town Clerk.

COMPLAINTS

A complaint raised on social media will not be considered a formal complaint, however the complainant will be invited to formally complain through the official channels and a link to the Council's Complaints Procedure will be associated with the complainant's comment on social media, where possible.

Social Media Policy was Adopted by Loddon Parish Council on 12 November 2020 and was reviewed by Loddon Town Council at its meeting held on the 11 December 2024

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 1

Rules for use of social media

Whenever you are permitted to use social media in accordance with this policy, you must adhere to the following general rules:

- 1.1. Do not upload, post or forward a link to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content.
- 1.2. Any employee, volunteer or member who feels that they have been harassed or bullied, or are offended by material posted or uploaded by a colleague onto a social media website should inform the Town Clerk or the Chairman of the Council.
- 1.3. Never disclose commercially sensitive, personal, private, or confidential information. If you are unsure whether the information you wish to share falls within one of these categories, you should discuss this with the Town Clerk or the Chairman of the Council.
- 1.4. Do not upload, post, or forward any content belonging to a third party unless you have that third party's consent.
- 1.5. Before you include a link to a third-party website, check that any terms and conditions of that website permit you to link to it.
- 1.6. When making use of any social media platform, you must read and comply with its terms of use.
- 1.7. Be honest and open but be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people's perceptions of the council.
- 1.8. You are personally responsible for content you publish into social media tools.
- 1.9. Do not escalate heated discussions, try to be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations.
- 1.10. Do not discuss employees without their prior approval.
- 1.11. Always consider others' privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory e.g. politics and religion.
- 1.12. Avoid publishing your contact details where they can be accessed and used widely by people you did not intend to see them, and never publish anyone else's contact details.