

FELTWELL PARISH COUNCIL

SOCIAL MEDIA & ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS **POLICY**

INTRODUCTION

The use of digital and social media and electronic communications enables Feltwell Parish Council to interact in a way that improves communications both within the Council itself and between the Council and the people, businesses and agencies it works with and serves.

Feltwell Parish Council has a website, a Facebook page and uses email to communicate. The Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications. Over time, the Council may add to the channels of communication it uses as it seeks to improve and expand the services it delivers. When these changes occur, this policy will be updated to reflect the new arrangements.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL

The Council's website and Facebook page provide information and updates regarding the work of the Council and activities and opportunities within our parish. They aim to promote our community positively.

Communications from Feltwell Parish Council will meet the following criteria:

- they will be civil, tasteful and relevant;
- they will not contain any content that is knowingly unlawful, libellous, defamatory, obscene, vulgar, abusive, hateful or threatening;
- they will not harass or discriminate on the basis of race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference or other factors;
- they will not contain content knowingly copied from elsewhere, for which the Council does not own the copyright;
- they will not contain any personal information about third parties unless consent has been given by the third parties concerned;
- they will not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising.

All official communications from the Council will be moderated and published by either the Parish Clerk or the Chairman of the Council.

EMAILING THE COUNCIL

The Parish Clerk has a dedicated email address (feltwellparishclerk@gmail.com) which members of the public may use for contacting the Council. The Clerk is responsible for responding to emails received by the Council and for passing on any relevant emails to members of the Council for information and/or action. The Clerk's email account is monitored mainly during office hours, Monday to Friday, on a part-time basis, though the Clerk aims to respond to all emails received as soon as possible.

Members of the public may also contact members of the Council directly, using the councillor email addresses provided on the Council's website. Individual councillors are at liberty to communicate directly with parishioners in relation to their own personal views. If appropriate, these messages may be copied to the Clerk to ensure that a complete and proper record of correspondence is kept (any emails copied to the Clerk become official and will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act). All emails sent on behalf of the Council will usually come from the Clerk or will be copied to the Clerk.

DATA PROTECTION

In accordance with the terms of its *Information and Data Protection Policy*, the Council will not share emails containing personal data with any other third party without the permission of the data subject (in this instance, personal data includes names, addresses, email or IP addresses, and cookie identifiers). All emails requiring personal data to be shared with a third party in order for action to be taken will require the completion of a data consent form before further action may be taken with that correspondence.

All personal information provided to Feltwell Parish Council through the Council's website or Facebook page will be processed and stored according to the terms of the Council's *Information and Data Protection Policy*. By transacting with Feltwell Parish Council through its website or Facebook page, individuals are deemed to be giving consent for their personal data as provided to be processed and stored in accordance with the *Information and Data Protection Policy*.

TERMS OF USE

By accessing Feltwell Parish Council's website or Facebook page, members of the public agree to be bound by the terms of use set out in this policy and by any individual terms of use displayed on the Council's website or Facebook page.

The Council reserves the right to monitor and administer its website and Facebook Page as it sees fit. Any communications received which are not in line with this policy or the stated terms of use will be removed as quickly as is practicably possible.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

'Social media' is a collective term used to describe methods of publishing on the internet. This policy covers all forms of social media and social networking which include, but are not limited to:

- the Parish Council's website;
- Facebook, Twitter and other microblogging or social networking sites;
- YouTube and other video clips and podcast sites;
- LinkedIn;
- blogs and discussion forums;
- Parish Council emails.

Members of the Council and the Parish Clerk may use SMS (texting), Facebook Messenger and Whatsapp from time to time as a convenient way to communicate. This policy also applies to these type of messages and to the use of video conferencing (e.g. Skype) should this medium be used to communicate.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Councillors are expected to abide by the Council's Code of Conduct in all of their work on behalf of the Parish Council. When participating in any online communications, councillors should ensure it is clear whether they are posting as a councillor or in a private capacity as an individual.

Councillors should be mindful of the information they post online and should ensure personal opinions are not published as being that of the Parish Council. Comments made online by councillors should not bring the Council into disrepute or be contrary to the Council's Code of Conduct or any other Council policy. Councillors should not present themselves online in a way that may cause reputational issues, and they should never make false or misleading statements.

As more and more information becomes available at the press of a button, it is vital that all information is treated sensitively and securely. Councillors should maintain an awareness of the confidentiality of information they have access to and should not share personal data or confidential information online. Members should be careful only to cc essential recipients into emails (i.e. to avoid use of the 'Reply To All' option where possible) and to remove email trails where necessary to prevent the sharing of personal data. Failure to properly observe confidentiality may be seen as a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct and will be dealt with through the Council's prescribed procedures.