

# WOODCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to set out clear guidelines for the appropriate use of social media by Woodchurch Parish Council (WPC) members, employees, and those authorised to post on behalf of the Council. It ensures that social media is used in a respectful, lawful, and effective manner to promote transparency, engagement, and communication with the community.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to:

- Parish Councillors
- Council staff
- Volunteers and contractors
- Any individuals authorised to represent WPC on social media platforms

### **Definition of Social Media**

Social media includes, but is not limited to:

- Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram, LinkedIn
- YouTube or other video sharing platforms
- Blogs, discussion forums, and comment sections on websites
- Any other online platform used for communication or sharing content

### **Official Accounts**

The Parish Council may maintain official social media accounts (e.g., Facebook page or community noticeboard). These accounts:

- Are the only authorised online voice of the Council
- Will be managed by the Clerk or an appointed administrator
- Will be used to share Council news, public notices, meeting dates, agendas, minutes, and other relevant community information

### **Guidelines for Use**

When using social media in an official capacity, users must:

- Be respectful, honest, and polite at all times
- Ensure posts are accurate and not misleading
- Avoid political, defamatory, or inflammatory content
- Never disclose confidential or personal information
- Refrain from engaging in heated debates or arguments
- Use correct spelling and grammar and maintain a professional tone

### **Councillors' Personal Use**

Councillors are encouraged to make it clear when they are posting in a personal capacity. When using personal social media accounts:

- Do not claim to speak on behalf of the Council
- Avoid posting anything that may damage the reputation of the Council
- Be mindful of the Code of Conduct and GDPR responsibilities
- Remember that posts, even when deleted, can be archived or shared

### **Monitoring and Moderation**

- The Clerk or appointed administrator will monitor activity on official accounts
- Inappropriate or offensive comments may be removed or hidden at the discretion of the administrator
- Any abusive or threatening messages will be documented and reported

### **Breach of Policy**

Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action for employees or a referral to the Monitoring Officer for Councillors. Breaches may include:

- Misuse of official accounts
- Posting confidential or harmful information
- Harassment or bullying via social media

### **Freedom of Information and Record-Keeping**

Posts on official platforms may be subject to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and must be archived where necessary. The Council will retain digital records in accordance with its Data Retention Policy.

### **Review and Amendments**

This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed. Amendments may be made by resolution of the Council.