

# Ramsey and Parkeston Parish Council

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

The use of social media now has a clear and compelling impact on all areas of local government enabling better and direct contact between the Parish Council, the people and businesses that it serves and the agencies that it works with.

The aim of this policy is to set out a Code of Practice to provide guidance to Ramsey & Parkeston Parish Councillors in the use of the online communications, collectively referred to as Social Media, and their relations with the new media in such a way as to ensure the smooth running of the Council. The policy covers all forms of social media and social networking sites which include (but not limited to):

- Parish Council website
- Parish Council emails
- Social networking – eg [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)
- Video sharing – eg. [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)
- Micro-blogging – eg. [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)

The use of social media is not to replace existing form of communication with noticeboards notices and newsletters to run side by side of electronic communications to reach all residents, with or without access to electronic communications.

This policy outlines the standards the Council requires councillors and clerk to the council to observe when using social media, the circumstances in which the Council will monitor the use of social media and the action to be taken in respect of breaches of this policy.

This policy supplements and should be read in conjunction with all other policies, such as the Councils' New Media Policy, and procedures adopted by the Council. This policy does not form part of any contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

### Principals

To publish information about the work of Ramsey & Parkeston Parish Council to a wider audience.

The Council will encourage the use of social media for the purpose of:-

- Providing and exchanging information about services
- Supporting local democracy
- Gathering citizen insights and managing citizen relationships
- Promoting cultural events for the area
- Creating internal communications, learning and development

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## COUNCIL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

1. The Council will appoint a nominated Councillor(s) as moderator(s) with the responsibility for posting and monitoring of the content. The Moderator will have the authority to remove any posts made by third parties from our social media pages which are deemed to be of a defamatory, libel nature. Such posts will be also reported to the Hosts (eg Facebook) and the clerk for recording.
2. The clerk to the Council will take responsibility as Webmaster to maintain and update the Parish Council website.
3. All social media sites in use should be checked on a regular basis to ensure that the security settings remain in place.
4. Social Media may be used to:
  - Post minutes and dates of meetings
  - Advertise events and activities of the Council and third parties
  - Good news stories
  - Planning news
  - News from Tendring District Council
  - Sharing information from partners: i.e. police, library, health etc.
  - Sharing information from other Parish related community groups and schools
  - Refer resident queries to the Clerk and/or relevant Councillors.
  - Facebook and/or Twitter will be used to support the website and promulgate news.
  - Emails will continue to be used to distribute information on Council business.
5. Individual Parish Councillors are responsible for what they post. Councillors are personal responsible for any online activity conducted via their published e-mail address which is for the use of council business ONLY.

## Users of Social Media

1. All councillors and the clerk to the Council are expected to comply with this policy at all times to protect the reputation, privacy, confidentiality and interests of the Council, its services, employees, partners and community.
2. Serious breaches of this policy may be dealt with in respect of unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually orientated or racially offensive comments by any councillor or clerk to the Council.
3. Behaviour required by the Members' Code of Conduct shall apply to online activity in the same way it does with written or verbal communications. It is essential to remember that in posting on the internet means that remarks have been published in a way that cannot be withdrawn, therefore online content should be objective, balanced, informed and accurate and does not contain

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anyone's personal information other than already basic contact details that have been promulgated through other avenues.

4. If councillors or the clerk to the council blog or tweet personally and not in their role as a councillor, they must not act, claim to act or give the impression that they are acting as a representative of the council. They should not include web links to the official Council website as this may give or reinforce the impression that they are representing the council.

**The Social Policy of the Ramsey and Parkeston Parish Council is signed as adopted at the meeting of the Council held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016**

**Signed: Chairman**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_