PORINGLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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Social Media Policy

Policy Reference	PPC 33
Version Number	2
Associated Documents	• PPC8 Code of Conduct – Staff • PPC3 Code of Conduct – Councillors • PPC32 Press and Media Policy • PPC20 Disciplinary Policy • PPC19 Data Protection inc GDPR Policy • PPC11 Equality and Diversity Policy
Last Review Date	September 2025
Frequency of Review	Two Years
Approved by	Full Council
Date for Next Review	September 2027

This is a non-contractual policy that does not require approval from employees before changes are made. Staff will remain bound by amended non-contractual policies.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The aim of this policy is to outline the terms agreed by Poringland Parish 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 expected to comply with this policy at all times 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 (PPC 20) and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.

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

- Poringland Parish Council owned and run websites
- Parish Council Facebook accounts including community groups it is associated with
- Parish Council Twitter accounts
- Parish Council Instagram accounts

USE OF PARISH 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 Parish Council assets
- Promotion of Poringland Community Centre including events and seasonal activities
- Responding to comments made by members of the public where appropriate.

Poringland Parish Council hereby agrees that:

- Only agreed personnel may represent council under their social media guise (Parish Clerk and the Bookings and Events Officer)
- Representation on behalf of the Council may only come from an official Parish Council account, and not from an individual's personal account
- All published correspondence will follow council's agreed Equality and Diversity Policy (PPC 11)
- Personal information will be handled in accordance with current Data Protection laws (PPC 19)
- 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 i.e. Media Consent Forms, except large scale events/groups

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY PARISH COUNCILLORS

Poringland Parish 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 parish councillors are bound by the Code of Conduct (PPC 3), 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
vii. leadership

MONITORING AND REVIEW

We will establish appropriate monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of our social media policy. The effectiveness of the social media policy will be reviewed every two years 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 Parish 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.