



SALFORD PRIORS PARISH COUNCIL SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Document Control	
Minute Number	14b 17.6.26
Adopted On	21.6.23
Reviewed	17.6.26
Review Date	Jun 28

About this policy

This policy is in place to assist Members of the Council to minimise the risk of being found to have breached the Members' Code of Conduct through their use of social media.

This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, LinkedIn, X (Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, blogs, forums and similar online communication platforms, whether now or introduced in the future. It applies to use of social media whenever you are acting in the capacity of a councillor as well as personal use in your private capacity that may affect the Council in any way.

The Council may amend this policy at any time.

Personal use of social media

Personal use of social media is permitted provided all usage is undertaken responsibly and in a way that does not bring the Council into disrepute or conflict with the Members' Code of Conduct.

Where the Council provides Members with official email accounts, these should be used for Council business. Personal social media accounts must not imply Council endorsement unless specifically authorised.

Prohibited use

- You must never make any social media communications that could damage the Council's interests or reputation, even indirectly.
- You must not use social media to defame or disparage the Council, other members, the Council's staff or any third party.
- You must not harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against other members, the Council's staff or any third party.
- You must not make false or misleading statements; or impersonate other members, the Council's staff or any third party.
- You must not do anything to jeopardise the Council's confidential information and intellectual property. Please do not include the Council's logos or other trademarks in any social media posting or in your profile on any social media unless authorised by the Council.
- You must not publish personal data or information relating to residents, staff, contractors or any third party unless there is a lawful basis to do so and publication is consistent with data protection legislation. Particular care should be taken when sharing photographs, correspondence, screenshots or meeting documents online.

Guidelines for responsible use of social media

- Unless specifically authorised by the Council, Members must not present themselves on social media as speaking on behalf of the Council or as representing the Council's formal position.
- Where Members comment in a personal capacity, they should make clear that the views expressed are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Council.
- You must be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that you are personally responsible for all communications (including posting or sharing images and sharing other content online) which may remain publicly accessible and may be shared or archived by others.
- Members are expected to uphold the Nolan Principles of Public Life and the Council's Code of Conduct when using social media. The same standards of respect, civility and professionalism expected in Council meetings and correspondence apply online.

- You must ensure that your profile and any content you post is consistent with your capacity as an elected representative of the Council.
- Members should exercise caution when commenting on planning applications, licensing matters or any issue that may later be considered by the Council. Public statements on social media may give rise to concerns about predetermination or bias. Members should avoid expressing a closed mind on matters before formal consideration by the Council.
- Members should avoid engaging in prolonged or heated exchanges online.
- Where comments are abusive, threatening or potentially unlawful, Members should report or retain a record of the content and seek advice rather than responding immediately.
- If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, please refrain from posting it until you have discussed it with the Monitoring Officer or the Clerk.
- If you see social media content that disparages or reflects poorly on the Council, other members, the Council's staff or any third party, please contact the Clerk and/or Monitoring Officer.

Breach of this policy

Breach of this policy may be a breach of the Code of Conduct.

Breaches may be referred to the Monitoring Officer and dealt with in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and complaints procedures.