

Dethick, Lea and Holloway Social Media Policy
Approved at Parish Council Meeting date: 3/3/21

Policy Statement

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

This social media policy aims to describe how the Parish Council will use social media to improve and expand its communication whilst setting out what is and is not an acceptable use of social media. This policy will complement the existing Code of Conduct for Councillors.

Scope

Social media are interactive digitally-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation or sharing/exchange of information. From February 2021, Dethick, Lea and Holloway Parish Council will use a Facebook account, for a trial period of 6 months. At the end of this period the Parish Council will consider whether or not to continue.

Social media will allow DLH Parish Council to publish information about its work to a wider audience and encourage participation and engagement.

This policy relates to any social media communication published on or behalf of the council or any individual in their capacity as a councillor.

Responsibilities and Accountabilities

The Parish Clerk is responsible for all formal communication between the council, residents, businesses, and government agencies.

A Councillor volunteer authorised by the Parish Council will manage all aspects of the Parish Council's Facebook account. In the event of the Councillor volunteer being unavailable to maintain the account and a replacement volunteer cannot be found, the account will be deleted.

Key Principles for Use of Social Media

Social media communications on behalf of the Parish Council will meet the following criteria:

- Councillors should be familiar with the guidelines of the application being used, e.g., Facebook and always adhere to them.

- Information that is not already in the public domain, should not be published via social media.
- Information published should be factual, relevant, non-discriminatory. It should not be intimidatory, bullying or unlawful.
- Copyright laws must be respected. When referencing (with approval) a link back to the source should be stated wherever possible.
- When publishing on social media be aware that the information may stay in the public domain indefinitely, with no opportunity for retrieval or deletion.
- Communication with parishioners is an important part of an officers' role but councillors should not make commitments on behalf of the Council; not bring the Council into disrepute and always respect confidentiality.
- Councillors are ambassadors for the council and should always use social media in a way which reflects this and be mindful of the binding Code of Conduct which governs their behaviour, additionally always applying the 7 Nolan principles applicable to holding public office, namely : selflessness,integrity,objectivity,accountability,openness,honesty and leadership.
- When using material pertaining to third parties, Councillors will ensure that such third parties are fully informed about its intended use and consent is obtained, in writing, prior to such material being published.
- Personal information relating to an individual, such as names, addresses, email addresses and photos must not be published without the written consent of that individual.
- The principles of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) must be adhered to at all times.
- Sending a message via Facebook will not be considered to be contacting the Parish Council for official purposes and the Council is not obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through social media.
- Businesses will not be promoted or advertised.
- Any views or opinions must be those of the Parish Council.
- Political statements or opinions must not be made.

Dethick, Lea and Holloway Parish Council will remove any comment or content that includes:

- Obscene or racist content
- Personal attacks, insults or uses threatening language
- Potentially libellous statements
- Plagiarised material. Any unlawful material including that breaches copyright law.
- Private or personal information published without consent
- Information or links unrelated to the content of the forum
- Commercial promotions or spam
- Anything in breach of the 'Key Principles for Use of Social Media' listed above

Related Policies and Procedures

These include, but are not limited to:

Councillor Code of Conduct

Data Protection