

DALTON WITH NEWTON TOWN COUNCIL

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Policy Adopted:

Review Date:

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the appropriate use of social media, electronic communications and the Council's website, and to ensure that communications are professional, lawful and respectful.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Town Councillors
- Employees
- Contractors acting on behalf of the Council
- Users interacting with Council-managed social media platforms

3. Social Media

The Council may use social media platforms including Facebook and any future approved platforms to:

- Share Council news and information;
- Promote community events and initiatives;
- Signpost residents to relevant services;
- Engage with residents in an appropriate manner.

Official Council social media accounts shall be administered by the Clerk or a person authorised by the Council.

4. Standards for Council Communications

All communications issued on behalf of the Council must:

- Be accurate, respectful and professional;
- Comply with relevant legislation;
- Avoid political bias or campaigning;
- Respect copyright and intellectual property rights;

- Not disclose confidential or personal information.

5. Public Comments and Interaction

The Council welcomes constructive engagement but reserves the right to remove content containing:

- Offensive, threatening or abusive language;
- Discriminatory or hateful content;
- Personal attacks;
- Defamatory or potentially libellous statements;
- Commercial advertising or spam;
- Material that breaches copyright;
- Personal data published without consent;
- Content unrelated to the original topic.

Repeat offenders may be blocked from Council social media channels.

6. Contacting the Council

Social media channels are not monitored continuously and should not be used for:

- Formal complaints;
- Freedom of Information requests;
- Subject Access Requests;
- Reporting emergencies.

Residents should contact the Clerk directly using the Council's published contact details.

7. Council Website

The Council website shall provide information about:

- Council meetings;
- Agendas and minutes;
- Policies and procedures;
- Statutory notices;
- Community information.

The Clerk is responsible for ensuring information remains accurate and up to date.

The Council may permit community groups to provide information through the website. Such groups remain responsible for the accuracy and legality of their content.

8. Email Communications

Council business should be conducted through official Council email accounts wherever possible.

The Clerk is responsible for managing incoming correspondence and ensuring appropriate responses are issued.

Councillors communicating directly with residents should copy the Clerk where appropriate to ensure a proper record is maintained.

9. Text Messaging and Video Conferencing

This policy applies equally to:

- SMS and messaging applications;
- Video conferencing platforms;
- Any future electronic communication methods used for Council business.

10. Records Management

Electronic communications relating to Council business may constitute official Council records and may be subject to:

- Freedom of Information legislation;
- Data Protection legislation;
- The Council's Retention Policy.

11. Review

This policy shall be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or operational requirements change.

Signed

Chair

Minute Number