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Social Media Policy

INTRODUCTION

Social media offers a range of opportunities for local councils to use the internet to communicate and engage with local residents. However, to ensure the most is made of these opportunities, and to ensure the risks are appropriately managed.

POLICY

This policy provides guidance for employee and Councillor use of social media, which should be broadly understood for purposes of this policy to include blogs, wikis, microblogs, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, social network site, and other sites and services that permit users to share information with others in a contemporary manner. The Parish Clerk is responsible for the information to be released on Eckington Parish Council social media sites.

PROCEDURES

The following principles apply to professional use of social media on behalf of Eckington Parish Council as well as personal use of social media when referencing to Eckington Parish Council.

- Employees and Councillors must adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct and other policies when using social media in reference to Eckington Parish Council.
- Employees/Councillors should be aware of the effect their actions may have on their images, as well as the Council's image. The information that employees/Councillors post or publish may be public information for a long time.
- Employees/Councillors should be aware that Eckington Parish Council may observe content and information made available by employees/Councillors through social media. Employees/Councillors should use their best judgement in posting material that is neither inappropriate nor harmful to Eckington Parish Council, its employees and customers.

- Although not an exhaustive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include posting commentary, content or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, excitement to hate, harassing, libellous, or that can create a hostile work environment.
- Employees/Councillors are not to publish, post or release any information that is considered confidential. If there are any questions about what is considered confidential, employees/Councillors should check with the Clerk.
- Social media networks, blogs and other types of online content sometimes generate press and media attention or legal questions. Employees/Councillors should refer these enquiries to the Clerk.
- If employees/Councillors find themselves in a situation while using social media that threaten to become antagonistic, employees/Councillors should disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner and seek the advice of the Clerk.
- Employees/Councillors should get appropriate permission before referring or posting images of current or former employees, Councillors, vendors or suppliers. Additionally, employees/Councillors should get appropriate permission to use third party's copyrighted material, trademarks, service marks or other intellectual property.
- Social media should not interfere with employee's responsibilities at Eckington Parish Council. The Council's computer systems are to be used for business purpose only. When using the Council's computer systems, use of social media for business purposes only is allowed. Personal use of online content is discouraged and could result in disciplinary action.
- Subject to applicable law, after-hours online activity that violates the Council's Code of Conduct or any policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action or termination of employment. In a Councillors case it may result in a complaint and a hearing of the North East Derbyshire Standards Committee.
- If employees/ Councillors publish content after-hours that involve work or subjects associated with the Council, a disclaimer should be used, such as this: "The postings on this site are my own and may not represent the Council's position, strategies or opinions."
- It is highly recommended that employees/Councillors keep Council related social media accounts separate from personal accounts, if practical.

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