

# NOCTON PARISH COUNCIL

## Social Media Policy

### Definitions

**NPC** – Nocton Parish Council

**Clerk and/or Proper Officer** – The Clerk to Nocton Parish Council

**Council** – Nocton Parish Council (NPC)

**Members** – All Councillors of Nocton Parish Council

**Parishioner(s)** – Residents of Nocton

**Parish** – the villages of Nocton

**Staff/Officer(s)** – All employees of Nocton Parish Council

**Administrator(s)** – Members/Staff responsible for the administration and monitoring of any NPC Social Media

NPC has not adopted an official PC Social Media platform to communicate with Parishioners. The existing What's On in Nocton Facebook Page may be used to relay information regarding PC activities.

Members of NPC are encouraged but not compelled to become members of this group. Any member of the group is able to post a comment and to respond to the comments of others. However, certain guidelines need to be considered by members of NPC:

1. Posts must be of direct interest to NPC Parishioners.
2. Posts are intended to develop communications with Parishioners.
3. Commercial advertising is not allowed by NPC on this group.
4. Posts by Members must reflect the status of NPC.
5. Members should not make personal comments.
6. At all times consideration should be given as to how the post may affect the reputation of NPC.
7. Electioneering is not allowed by NPC on this group.

Other forms of social media may be considered as useful to NPC. The guidelines above apply equally to any other use of social media by Members /Officers of NPC.

### Council Use of Social Media

#### **A. Principles**

1. To publish information about the work of NPC to a wider audience.
2. To avoid entering into online debates or arguments about NPC's work.
3. Social Media must NOT be used in the recruitment process for Staff/Officers or new Members - other than for the sole purpose of placing vacancy advertisements - as this could lead to potential discrimination and privacy actions, as well as breach of data protection issues.

## **B. Users of Council Social Media**

In accordance with NPC adopted Communications Policy, clause no. 4(a) & 4(b) the Parish Clerk is the Council's nominated Press Officer with the authority to issue official press releases.

## **C. Guidance for Council Officers on the use of Council Social Media**

1. Officers should be familiar with the terms of use on third party websites – eg. Facebook - and adhere to these at all times
2. No information should be published that is not already known to be in the public domain – ie. available on NPC website, contained in minutes of meetings, stated in NPC publicised policies and procedures, etc.
3. Information that is published should be factual, fair, thorough and transparent.
4. Officers must be mindful that information published in this way may stay in the public domain indefinitely, without the opportunity for retrieval/deletion.
5. Copyright laws must be respected.
6. Conversations or reports that are meant to be private or internal must not be published without permission.
7. Other organisations should not be referenced without their approval – when referencing, link back to the original source wherever possible.
8. Do not publish anything that would be regarded in the workplace as unacceptable.
9. Members and Staff must remember that they will be seen as ambassadors for NPC, and should always act in a responsible and socially aware manner.

## **D. Third party Social Media and Individual Councillor Usage**

Councillors must comply with the requirements of the NPC communications Policy in regard to whether they are acting in a private capacity, or whether any impression might be conveyed that they are acting for and on behalf of NPC. NPC has adopted a Code of Conduct which is binding on all members. If a Member uses Social Media in their official capacity as a Parish Councillor, he/she should always be mindful of the Code, and of the seven Nolan principles applicable to holding public office – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

### **Do:**

1. Set appropriate privacy settings for any blog or networking site
2. Be alert to the possibility for defamatory or obscene posts from others on any blog or page and remove them as soon as possible to avoid any perception that NPC / the Member condones such views.
3. Be aware that the higher the individuals profile as a NPC Member, the more likely it is that he/she may be seen as acting in an official capacity when blogging or networking.
4. Ensure any NPC facilities are used appropriately – if using a NPC-provided blog site or social networking area, any post that a Member makes is extremely likely to be viewed as being made in his/her official capacity.
5. Avoid publishing any information that could only have accessed in his/her position as a NPC Member.
6. Members must avoid being specific or personal about individuals.
7. Members must not make party-political statements or stances when posting in their capacity as a Parish Councillor.

### **Don't:**

1. Blog in haste
2. Post comments that would not be made in writing or in face-to-face contact

3. Use Council facilities for personal or political purposes

Re-Adopted on Date.....15/10/19

Review of this policy is due : October 2020