

Cawston Parish Council

Cawston Community Hall, Scholars Drive, Cawston, Rugby CV22 7GU

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. Scope

The aim of this Policy is to set out a Code of Practice to provide guidance to staff and Parish Councillors in the use of online communications, collectively referred to as social media.

Social media is a collective term used to describe methods of publishing on the internet. The policy covers all forms of social media and social networking sites which include (but are not limited to):

- Parish Council Website
- Facebook, Myspace and other social networking sites
- Twitter and other micro blogging sites
- Youtube and other video clips and podcast sites
- LinkedIn
- Bloggs and discussion forums
- Parish Council Emails

2. Who does it apply to?

The principles of the Policy apply to Cawston Parish Councillors and staff.

It is also intended for guidance for others communicating with the Cawston Parish Council (CPC).

The policy sits alongside the Communications Policy which needs to be taken into consideration.

3. Use of Social Media

The use of social media is will not replace existing forms of communication. The Parish Council Newsletter (CPCN)is not produced in hard copy form therefore social media will become a useful media for the purpose of communicating information about CPC. All information will be shared with the public via social media and the website.

4. Policy

CPC has a Parish Clerk who will be responsible for posting and monitoring of the content ensuring it complies with the Social Media Policy. The Parish Clerk will also act as moderator and retain the authority to remove any posts made by third parties from CPC's social media pages which are deemed to be of a defamatory, libel nature. Such post will also be reported to the hosts (i.e. Facebook) and the Parish Clerk. All social media sites in use should be checked and updated on a regular basis and ensure that the security settings are in place. The Parish Clerk will also maintain and update the Parish Council Website.

Social media may be used to :-

- Post minutes and dates of meetings
- Advertise events and activities
- Good news stories linked website or press page
- Vacancies
- Retweeting or 'share' information from partners i.e. Police, Library and Health etc.
- Announcing new information.

Cawston Parish Council

Cawston Community Hall, Scholars Drive, Cawston, Rugby CV22 7GU

- Post or Share information from other Parish related community groups/clubs/associations/bodies e.g. Schools, sports clubs and community groups
- Refer resident queries to the clerk and all other councillors

Councillors or parishioners who have any concerns regarding content placed on social media sites should report them to the Parish Clerk.

5. Guidance for Councillors using the Council's Social Media Presence

Individual Parish councillors are responsible for what they post. Councillors are personally responsible for any online activity conducted via their published e-mail address which is used for council business.

When participating in any online communication;

- a. Be responsible and respectful; be direct, informative, brief and transparent.
- b. Always disclose your identity and affiliation to the Parish Council. Never make false or misleading statements.
- c. Parish Councillors should not present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment. All Parish Councillors need to be mindful of the information they post on sites and make sure personal opinions are not published as being that of CPC or bring CPC into disrepute or is contrary to the CPC Code of Conduct or any other Policies.
- d. Keep the tone of your comments respectful and informative, never condescending or "loud." Use sentence case format, not capital letters, or write in red to emphasis points.
- e. Refrain from posting controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks. Language that may be deemed as offensive relating in particular to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age or religion or belief should not be published on any social media site.
- f. Avoid personal attacks, online fights, and hostile communications.
- g. Never use an individual's name unless you have written permission to do so.
- h. Permission to publish photographs or videos on social media sites should be sought from the persons or organisations in the video or photograph before being uploaded.
- i. Do not post any information or conduct any online activity that may violate laws or regulations, *see below libel and copyright*.

6. Responding to public posts

Residents and Councillors should note that not all communication requires a response.

- a. There will not be immediate responses to communications as they may be discussed by CPC and all responses will be agreed by the CPC.
- b. The Parish Clerk will be responsible for all final published responses.
- c. If a matter needs further consideration, it may be raised at either the open forum or as a full agenda item for consideration by a quorum of Councillors. Again, the poster shall be informed via the page or direct message that this is the case.
- d. If the moderator feels unable to answer a post for example of a contentious nature this shall be referred to the Parish clerk. The poster will be informed by way of response to this fact and also be invited to correspond with the Parish Clerk directly.
- e. Some communication from residents and other third parties may be required to be discussed at a Parish Council meeting. When this is necessary the item will be placed on the next available agenda. Any response will then be included in the minutes of the meeting.

Cawston Parish Council

Cawston Community Hall, Scholars Drive, Cawston, Rugby CV22 7GU

Councillors or parishioners who have any concerns regarding content placed on social media sites should report them to the Parish Clerk. Misuse of such sites in a manner that is contrary to this and other policies could result in action being taken.

This policy was adopted by Cawston Parish Council on 24th April and will be reviewed annually.