

# Horsted Keynes Parish Council

## **Social Media Policy & Code of Practice**

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## Social Media Policy

This policy is intended to open the door to social media use in our Parish rather than block it.

The Parish Council's Facebook page, or other social media sites, will be maintained by the Clerk.

The Youth Council's Facebook page, or other social media sites, will be maintained by members of the Youth Council.

Facebook or other social networking accounts may be used to:

- refer to the website for agendas, post minutes and dates of meetings.
- advertise events and activities.
- share good news stories or highlight action taken by the council following correspondence from the public with links to the Council website.
- advertise vacancies.
- share information from partner agencies such as Principal Authorities, Police, Library, Health, etc.
- announce new information or policies.
- post or share information from other parish related community groups such as schools, sports clubs, community groups and charities.
- refer resident queries to the Clerk and all other Councillors.

The Council will not conduct casework or deal with complaints via social media. These should be emailed to the Clerk.

Social media channels are not monitored constantly, and the Council cannot guarantee that enquires via social media will receive a prompt response. If an enquiry or comment is urgent, the Council recommends contacting the Clerk.

The Clerk will act as the moderator of Parish Council social media output and be responsible for posting and monitoring content to ensure it complies with the Council's social media Policy.

The Youth Council Liaison Member will act as a moderator of Youth Council social media output and be responsible for posting and monitoring content to ensure it complies with the Council's social media Policy.

The Parish Council reserves the right to moderate comments that are posted to its social media feeds, especially if they breach the Social Media Code of Practice outlined below. The Council makes no commitment to respond to individuals and repeat offenders may be blocked from using the Facebook page indefinitely. We will not edit any comments made.

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## Social Media Code of Practice

When using the Parish Council's and Youth Council's official social media channels, posts must not:

- hide the poster's identity using false names or pseudonyms.
- present personal opinions as that of the council.
- post content that is contrary to the democratic decisions of the council.
- post controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks.
- use an individual's name unless given written permission to do so.
- publish photographs or videos of minors without written parental permission.
- post any information that infringes copyright of others.
- post any information that may be deemed libel.
- post online in a way that constitutes bullying or harassment.
- bring the Council into disrepute.
- post offensive language relating to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age, religion or belief.
- conduct any online activity that violates laws, regulations or that constitutes a criminal offence.

Parish Council and Youth Council social media followers should adhere to certain good practices and conventions of polite and constructive discourse if responding to posts on its social media feeds.

Therefore, the Parish and Youth Council will not publish and will remove comments that:

- contain abusive, obscene, indecent, or offensive language.
- contain swear words or other sorts of profanity.
- contain abusive language towards an individual involved in the thread, other organisations, or the page administrator.
- are completely removed from the topic of conversation or non-relevant to the item posted on the wall.
- constitute spam or promote or advertise products except where it is for an event, publication or similar item that has direct relevance to the subject of discussion. Information about locating and sharing knowledge and expertise is welcomed, but within the specific discussion provided.
- are designed to cause nuisance to the page administrator or other users.

This policy and the Code of Practice will be reviewed annually and may be amended at any time if approved by resolution of the Parish Council. The policy should be considered alongside relevant existing Parish Council policies and augments the Code

of Conduct. This policy does not extend to individual Parish Councillor's and Youth Council's members or Council staff's personal use of social media.