Willingale Parish Council Social Media Policy

Reviewed and readopted 9th May 2023
Reviewed 11th March 2025
Next Review March 2027

The aim of this policy is to set out how Willingale Parish Council will use social media.

This policy covers the following forms of social media:

- Parish Council Website

- Facebook and, if required, other social networking sites. Email communication is not included in this Policy and is governed by a separate Email Communication Policy. The Council will maintain a Facebook account to inform the public about Parish Council business and activity. Social media augments the Parish Council website, newsletter and other methods of communication in use by the Parish Council. The Council's Facebook page is maintained by the Parish Clerk.

The Facebook or other social networking sites' 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 comments, questions or complaints via social media. These should be emailed to the Parish Clerk at clerk@willingaleparishcouncil.org.uk

Social media channels are not monitored constantly.

The Council's Proper Officer will act as moderator of Parish Council social media output and be responsible for posting and monitoring content to ensure it complies with the 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. This Code of Practice outlines expected standards of behaviour from those responsible for updating information when using the Parish Council's official social media feeds. It also sets an expectation for others who engage with the Council via those social media feeds. When using social media those making posts must be mindful of the information they post and keep the tone of any comments respectful and informative.

Every effort should be made to ensure online content published on the Council's official social media channels is accurate and informative.

When using the Parish 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 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 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 it augments the Code of Conduct. This policy does not extend to individual Parish Councillors' or Council staff's personal use of social media.