



The Clerk to Hilton Parish Council
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HILTON PARISH COUNCIL **COUNCILLORS SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

STATEMENT:

As an active member of the community, Hilton Parish Council realises the value and importance of social media. We also recognise the growing influence of social media and its widening scope. Hilton Parish Council has implemented the following social media policy to help our Councillors understand and adhere to standard responsible social media practices, put in place to protect the Councillors and Hilton Parish Council as a whole. (please note the staff policy for Social Media is covered in the staff Policies and Procedure Handbook)

Hilton Parish Council has a Facebook page, Councillors may contribute online, or they may participate in an online social network of any kind. For all Councillors the same guidelines will apply to activities on social media or any other form of online publishing.

This policy provides guidance for Hilton Parish Council's use of social media, which should be broadly understood for purposes of this policy to include anything from blogs, microblogs, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, social networking sites, and any other sites and services that permit users to share information with others.

POLICY FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

- Councillors need to know and adhere to the Hilton Parish Council's Code of Conduct, and other Hilton Parish Council policies and procedures, when using social media in reference to Hilton Parish Council
- Councillors should be aware that the Parish Council Clerk may observe content and information made available by Councillors through social media.
- Councillors should use their best judgment in posting material that is neither inappropriate nor harmful to Hilton Parish Council its employees, or customers.
- Normally, when you participate in social media, you are posting on your own behalf unless expressly requested or agreed by Hilton Parish Council. Any posts on social media or other online publishing should be made under your own name with no reference to Hilton Parish Council.
- When posting anything that may be associated with you professionally, it is vital that you post a disclaimer such as: "the opinion expressed here is entirely

my own and does not necessarily represent the views or opinions of Hilton Parish Council.

- If you identify yourself as a Hilton Parish Council Councillor via social media, your opinions and viewpoint must reflect the responsibilities of your position and the views of the Council as a Corporate Body.
- Although not an exclusive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libellous, or that can create a hostile work environment.
- Councillors are not to publish, post or release any information that is considered confidential or not a public record. If there are questions about what is considered confidential, you should check with the Clerk to Hilton Parish Council in the first instance.
- You must not, under any circumstances, disclose any personal information about Hilton Parish Council or its employees.
- You must not disclose confidential information about Hilton Parish Council, its practices, or any information meant to be shared only with fellow Councillors or employees.
- Remember that, as a Councillor, you are an ambassador for Hilton Parish Council, and your manner in all situations, including online, should reflect that in a positive way.
- Social media networks, blogs and other types of online content sometimes generate press and media attention or legal questions. Councillors should refer these inquiries to the Parish Council Clerk
- If a Councillor encounters a situation while using social media, that threatens to become antagonistic, they should disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner and seek the advice of the Parish Council Clerk.
- Always adhere to copyright standards and respect the intellectual property of others when utilising social media or other online publishing forms.
- Any rumours, slander, or confidential information shared via social media may have a significant negative impact on Hilton Parish Council, its employees and its reputation. Hilton Parish Council is insured for such an event but depending on the circumstances, certain things may not be covered by our underwriters.
- While on Hilton Parish Council time, no Councillor shall, at any time, share anything with another Councillor or employee via social media that may be considered inappropriate or fall under the category Not Suitable for Work-- known online as NSFW. This includes items of a sexual, profane, or excessively violent nature. These have no place in the work environment, and action may be taken against a Councillor under these circumstances.

BEST PRACTICE

- Always respect your audience. In every situation, use social media as a respectful tool to share ideas and information. Be especially mindful when dealing with sensitive subjects such as politics and religion.

- Share content intelligently. If you publish an item professionally, you may help to strengthen the community of Hilton Parish Council. Make sure what you publish is helpful, valuable, and promotes the principles of the Council.
- Protect your privacy. Always think twice before posting, and remember that what you share may remain in the public domain for a very long time afterwards. Make sure you are protecting your own privacy and that of Hilton Parish Council.
- Councillors are responsible for ensuring that their online activities do not interfere with their ability to perform their work, or to fulfil commitments to their co-workers.

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