

# EAST KIRKBY PARISH COUNCIL

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY (2026)

Adapted and Modified Specifically for East Kirkby Parish Council by  
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## Social Media Policy

### What is Social Media?

'Social media' is the term commonly given to websites and online tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. This interaction may be through computers, mobile phones and new generation technology such as I-Pads.

Examples of social media websites include:

- Social networking – (e.g. [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com))
- Video sharing – (e.g. [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com))
- Blogs (e.g. [london2012.com/blog](http://london2012.com/blog))
- Micro-blogging (e.g. [www.X.com](http://www.X.com) (formerly Twitter))
- Message boards (e.g. [www.bbc.co.uk/dna/mbsn/home](http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/mbsn/home))
- Wikis (e.g. [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org))
- Social bookmarking (e.g. [www.delicious.com](http://www.delicious.com))

### Parish Council Use of Social Media

#### Principles

- To publish information about the work of East Kirkby Parish Council to a wider audience.
- To avoid entering into online debates or arguments about the Parish Council's work.
- Social Media must NOT be used in the recruitment process for employees or new councillors - 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.

#### The Only Approved Council Social Media is:

- East Kirkby Parish Council website

#### Users of Council Social Media

- The Parish Clerk is the Council's nominated Press Officer with the authority to issue official press releases. No other member of staff (other than the Chairman deputising for the Parish Clerk) has the authority to issue public statements on behalf of the Council.

## **1. Guidance for Parish Councillors on the use of Parish Council Social Media**

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

## **2. Third party Social Media and Individual Parish Councillor Usage**

Parish Councillors need to think about whether they are acting in a private capacity, or whether any impression might be conveyed that they are acting for and on behalf of East Kirkby Parish Council. The Parish Council has adopted a Code of Conduct which is binding on all members. If you use Social Media in your official capacity as a Parish Councillor, you 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:**

- Set appropriate privacy settings for any blog or networking site.
- Watch out for defamatory or obscene posts from others on any blog or page and remove them as soon as possible to avoid any perception that you condone such vices.
- Be aware that the higher your profile as a Parish Councillor, the more likely it is that you may be seen as acting in an official capacity when you blog or network.
- Ensure any Parish Council facilities are used appropriately – if using a Parish Council-provided blog site or social networking area, any posts that you make are extremely likely to be viewed as being made in your official capacity.
- Avoid publishing any information that you could only have accessed in your position as a Parish Councillor.
- Be careful if making ‘political’ points and avoid being specific or personal about individuals.

### **Don’t:**

- Blog in haste.
- Post comments that you would not be prepared to make in writing or in face-to-face contact.
- Use Parish Council facilities for personal or political purposes.