



# **Social Media Policy**

**For Members of Stratford-on-Avon District Council**

## **1. About this policy**

- 1.1 This policy is in place to assist Members of the Council to minimise the risk of being found to have breached the Members' Code of Conduct through their use of social media.
- 1.2 This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, Wikipedia, Whisper, Instagram, Vine, Tumblr and all other social networking sites, internet postings and blogs. It applies to use of social media whenever you are acting in the capacity of a councillor as well as personal use in your private capacity that may affect the Council in any way.
- 1.3 The Council may amend this policy at any time.

## **2. Personal use of social media**

Personal use of social media is permitted by means of the Council's computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems provided that all usage is undertaken in a responsible manner. Members should never use their @stratford-dc.gov.uk email address to set up social media accounts.

## **3. Prohibited use**

- 3.1 You must never make any social media communications that could damage the Council's interests or reputation, even indirectly.
- 3.2 You must not use social media to defame or disparage the Council, other members, the Council's staff or any third party.
- 3.3 You must not harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against other members, the Council's staff or any third party.
- 3.4 You must not make false or misleading statements; or impersonate other members, the Council's staff or any third party.
- 3.5 You must not do anything to jeopardise the Council's confidential information and intellectual property. Please do not include the

Council's logos or other trademarks in any social media posting or in your profile on any social media.

#### **4. Guidelines for responsible use of social media**

- 4.1 You must make it clear in social media postings, or in your profile, whenever you are speaking on your own behalf in your capacity as an elected representative of the Council.
- 4.2 You must be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that you are personally responsible for all communications (including posting or sharing images and sharing other content online) which will be published on the internet for anyone to see.
- 4.3 You must ensure that your profile and any content you post is consistent with your capacity as an elected representative of the Council.
- 4.4 If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, please refrain from posting it until you have discussed it with the Monitoring Officer.
- 4.5 If you see social media content that disparages or reflects poorly on the Council, other members, the Council's staff or any third party, please contact the Monitoring Officer.

#### **5. The use of social media and mobile devices at public council meetings**

- 5.1 Use mobile devices sparingly, discreetly and with common sense at meetings, considering the impression they are giving to others. Remember that some meetings are webcast.
- 5.2 Frequent use of these devices during meetings may give the public the impression that you are not paying full attention to an item that is being discussed in a debate on a decision that is to be made.

5.3 Examples of acceptable use:-

- (a) Reading and annotating meeting papers and background information relevant to that meeting
- (b) Sending and receiving communications to/from home relating to domestic circumstances (e.g. childcare arrangements), within reason and with common sense.

Avoid the following:

- (a) Using social media during quasi-judicial meetings or during the consideration of confidential or exempt items of business at meetings:
- (b) Frequently checking emails and messages that are not related to the meeting
- (c) Taking and sending electronic images of proceedings and
- (d) Extended periods of use that would suggest that insufficient attention is being paid to the meeting.

**6. Breach of this policy**

Breach of this policy may be a breach of the Code of Conduct.

V	Description of document or amendment	Date
1	Original document	Council 16 October 2017
2	Revisions from Audit and Standards	24 September 2018