



FRAMLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The widespread availability and use of social networking applications bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with our audiences in new ways. It is important that the Town Council is able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that the Council balance this with its duties to its services users and partners, its legal responsibilities and its reputation.

For example, the Town Council's use of social networking applications has implications for its duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- that the Town Council is not exposed to legal and governance risks;
- that the reputation of the Town Council is not adversely affected;
- that our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the Town Council.

2. SCOPE

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by Town Council employees, Elected Members, and by partners or other third parties (including volunteers) acting on behalf of the Town Council.

All Town Council representatives should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the Town Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

3. ENFORCEMENT

The Town Clerk reserves the right to require the closure of any applications or removal of content published by Council representatives which may adversely affect the reputation of the Town Council or put it at risk of legal action.

4. POLICY

All proposals for using social networking applications as part of a Town Council service (whether they are hosted by the Town Council or by a third party) must be approved by the Town Clerk first.

Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. The Town Council expects that users of social

networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use.

TERMS OF USE

Social networking applications

1. must not be used to publish any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claims for damages. This includes but is not limited to material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring the Town Council into disrepute.
2. must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner.
3. must not be used for actions that would put Town Council representatives in breach of Town Council codes of conduct or policies relating to Elected Members or staff.
4. must not breach the Town Council's Equal Opportunities or Bullying and Harassment policies.
5. official Town Council profiles and pages must not be used for party political purposes or specific campaigning purposes as the Town Council is not permitted to publish material which 'in whole or part appears to affect public support for a political party' (LGA 1986)
6. official Town Council profiles and pages must not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests or personal campaigns.
7. official Town Council profiles and pages must not be used for the promotion of commercial ventures.

Where individuals, including volunteers, are involved and are acting on behalf of the Town Council, they will also be expected to comply with the relevant Town Council policies.

1. Where social networking applications are being managed by Town Council representatives, appropriate feedback and complaints information must be published in a prominent place which is easily accessible to other users.
3. The use of the Town Council's logo and other branding elements should be used where appropriate to indicate the Town Council's support. The logo should not be used on social networking applications which are unrelated to or are not representative of the Town Council's official position.
4. Town Council representatives should identify themselves as such where appropriate on social networking applications. For example, through providing additional information in user profiles.
5. Town Council representatives should ensure that any contributions they make are professional and uphold the reputation of the Town Council.
6. Members, if using their own social media account profiles, must ensure that they are either speaking in a personal capacity or simply providing details of works undertaken or policies agreed by Framlingham Town Council and not speaking on behalf of the Town Council.

All users need to be aware that applications may be closed for a defined period before local and national elections in order to comply with legislation which affects local authorities.