

# **OKEHAMPTON HAMLETS PARISH COUNCIL**

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

The Social Media Policy has been adopted to describe how Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council uses its website and social media to improve and expand the way in which it communicates with parishioners and local businesses. Increasingly, parish councils are expected to have an Internet presence, and social media provides an alternative channel for Council to interact with those who live in, work in and visit Okehampton Hamlets parish. Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications.

If Council expands or alters its channels of communication on the internet, then this Policy will be updated.

### **Social Media**

Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council operates a website and email account

Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council operates a Facebook account

Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council does not operate a Twitter account

Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council does not operate an Instagram account

All social media accounts are managed by the Clerk to Council, and overseen by the Councillor with Responsibility for Online Content.

All communications made from Council will follow the following guidelines:

- Civil, tasteful and relevant.
- Not contain unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive content.
- Not contain copyrighted content from elsewhere.
- Not contain any personal information, other than necessary basic contact details.
- Will be moderated by the Clerk to Council who may seek advice from the Chairman to the Council or the Councillor with Responsibility for Online Content.
- Not be used for any political advertising.

We ask that any communication to Council meet the following guidelines. Where necessary or appropriate Council will moderate accordingly:

- Civil, tasteful and relevant.
- Not contain unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive content.
- Not contain copyrighted content from elsewhere.
- Not sending large volumes of similar messages ("spamming").
- Not to contain anyone's personal information, other than necessary basic contact details.

Council reserves the right to remove posts or messages that breach any of these criteria. Any personal attacks on any person will be removed from our social media pages.

Contacting Council through its social media sites will not be considered as contacting Council for official purposes and Council will not be obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through these channels. Instead, parishioners are advised to use the contact details on the website. Communications received through social media sites may be redirected to the relevant email address. Council will not enter into debate on any of its social media accounts.

## **E-mail**

Council currently operates one email address, which is [mail@okehamptonhamlets-pc.gov.uk](mailto:mail@okehamptonhamlets-pc.gov.uk) The Clerk to Council is responsible for monitoring all emails and either responding, or redirecting them to the relevant Councillor or external agency. Due to the part-time nature of the position of Clerk, emails are not constantly monitored but will normally be checked daily Monday to Friday. We aim to respond to all emails as soon as possible, preferably within 5 working days.

## **Councillors email**

All Councillors have their own email addresses for Council business only. The format of these email addresses are [firstname.surname@okehamptonhamlets-pc.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@okehamptonhamlets-pc.gov.uk)

The Clerk will arrange to set these up for Councillors on appointment to their role of Councillor and also deletion of the address and all content upon them ceasing to be a councillor.

Councillors may only use their email address for council business and ensure that they comply with Okehampton Hamlets Code of Conduct policy at all times.

## **Website**

The website is managed by the Clerk to Council and is overseen by the Councillor with Responsibility for Online Content. The website is used to disseminate information to parishioners and to keep Council in line with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015.

## **Councillors Code of Conduct**

Councillors can have 'blurred identities' and may have social media accounts where they comment as individuals and not as Councillors. Such 'blurred identities' might have implications where individual views are taken as the views of Council. The key to whether online activity is subject to the Code of Conduct is whether the impression is given that councillors are acting as councillors or individuals. All Councillors should ensure that they are clear on social media and in emails when they are acting as councillors and when they are acting as individuals.

## **Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities**

The Transparency Code introduced in 2015 means that smaller councils such as Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council must publish:

- All items of expenditure over £100
- End of year accounts
- Annual governance statement
- Internal audit report
- List of councillors and member responsibilities
- Details of public land or building assets
- Minutes, agendas and meeting papers of formal meetings

## **Data Protection**

Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council abides by the General Data Protection Regulations and is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office.

Adopted by Council 4<sup>th</sup> December, minutes reference  
223/11.1