

Woodmansey Parish Council

Social Media Policy

Introduction and Purpose of Policy

Woodmansey Parish Council recognises the need to continually and innovatively review, enhance and improve its communication and engagement with the residents of Woodmansey, businesses and partner organisations by the use of online methods of communication. This policy provides guidance and reassurance as to how this can be achieved and how the Parish Council retains authority and control over such means of communication. In addition the policy provides guidance to Woodmansey Parish Councillors (Cllrs) and Officer(s) in the use of online communications, collectively referred to as social media, a term used to describe methods of publishing on the internet.

The policy covers all communication via the Parish Council website, emails and the social networking sites Twitter and Facebook (in so far as any of these are used by the Parish Council). The website will remain the main source of information about the Parish Council and its activities, and so called 'networking' platforms (Facebook and Twitter) will largely be used to speedily enhance/direct users to the website or other sources of information.

Management of Social Media used by the Parish Council

Whilst the Clerk will remain the key contact and administrator for social media activity, particularly in terms of the website management, support will be required from Cllrs as nominated 'moderators' who will monitor the social networking sites and may also respond to and initiate social media messages.

The principles of this policy apply to Parish Cllrs and Clerk and is also intended for general guidance for others communicating with the Parish Council. The policy sits alongside relevant existing Council policies e.g. Code of Conduct and Standing Orders, which should be taken into consideration.

Information on Social media applications

The website may be used to:

- Post minutes and agendas, dates of meetings
- Provide contact details for the Parish Council (Clerk and Cllrs)
- Advertise projects, events and activities being carried out by the Parish Council.
- Good news stories linked website or press page.
- Vacancies
- Announcing new information.
- Post or Share information from other Parish related community groups, clubs, associations, bodies e.g. Schools, sports clubs etc

Recognising the popularity of Facebook/Twitter, these will be used to support the website information above and provide a more informal platform for the Parish Council to provide information and updates regarding activities within Woodmansey and promote positive thoughts and comments from residents.

The Parish Council social media sites (and emails) are not monitored 24/7 and we will not always be able to reply individually to all messages or comments received. However, we will endeavour to ensure that any emerging themes or helpful suggestions are passed to the relevant people.

General guidance for Cllrs when using social media.

Whilst it is mainly the Parish Clerk having delegated responsibility for matters relating to social media and who is responsible for inputs into social media platforms as the 'Facebook Admin', Cllrs are expected to ensure the following principles are observed as matters of good practice and to take responsibility as 'moderators' for all final published content.

- Any social media content (even informal) needs to be clearly attributed to the Parish Council and content should not be presented in a way that might cause embarrassment or bring the Parish Council into disrepute - therefore all social media should, where practical, be authorised by Cllrs prior to publication. With this in mind the Parish Council is clear that not all communication requires an immediate response or even a response at all bearing in mind responses to communications may be discussed by the Parish Council and all responses will be agreed by the Parish Council.
- Whilst the Parish Clerk has delegated responsibility for matters relating to social media (specifically Facebook) all content on social media should not be an expression of individual opinion (that of individual Cllrs or the Clerk) which may bring the Parish Council into disrepute or is contrary to the Council's Code of Conduct or any other Policies.
- With regard to Facebook / Twitter, even though style may be less formal than the website, the tone of comments must remain respectful and informative, never condescending or "loud" and sentence case format, not capital letters should be the norm. Prolonged conversations or 'Ping-pong' Facebook / emails should be avoided, as should any controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks. Content should be responsible, respectful informative, and always transparent and able to be substantiated. In particular Cllrs should be extremely careful when making comments made by Cllrs on social media, particularly if it is obvious the person is posting as a Parish Cllr, specifically that comments made are not representative of the Parish Council, unless approved by fellow Cllrs. To ensure avoidance of doubt, all official and unofficial communications should originate from the Parish Clerk at the instruction of a majority of Cllrs.
- Permission to publish photographs or videos on social media sites should be sought from the persons or organisations in the video or photograph before uploaded.
- Avoid any content which may violate laws or regulations, in particular relating to data protection laws - for instance as a general rule, an individual's name or personal details should not be published on Parish Council social media unless written permission is provided to do so.
- Any negative posts placed on the Parish Council social media platforms which may contain personal and inflammatory racist, sexist or homophobic remarks or defamatory information will be removed by the Parish Clerk without further comment or notification. In addition the Parish Council reserve the right to remove comments or content that includes:
 - Obscene content
 - Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
 - Potentially libellous statements
 - Plagiarized material; any material in violation of any laws, including copyright
 - Private, personal information published without consent
 - Information or links unrelated to the Parish Council / Woodmansey village
- Cllrs or parishioners who have any concerns regarding content placed on social media sites should report them to the Clerk of the Council in the first instance - woodmanseyparishclerk@yahoo.com
- The Policy will be reviewed bi-annually.

General principles of Communication and legal waivers

- Sending a message/post via Facebook will not be considered as contacting the Council for official purposes and we will not be obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through the Facebook channel. Instead, please contact the Clerk.
- The Parish Council will never publish your personal details or pass them onto a third party without your express permission and you should not include personal/private information in your Facebook posts/messages to us. The Parish Council will not take responsibility for any consequences resulting from a person or persons publishing personal details on their social media platforms but will make every effort to remove them where requested.
- As a general rule the Parish Council will not allow its social media platforms to be used for business or commercial promotions and advertisements. Non-compliance will not be tolerated and can result in a ban.
- Public opinions expressed in comments on Woodmansey Parish Councils social media forums do not necessarily represent those of Woodmansey Parish Council.
- All comments, once posted, become the property of Woodmansey Parish Council and we reserve the right to reproduce, distribute, publish, display, or remove (subject to privacy restrictions).
- Woodmansey Parish Council are not responsible, liable for and do not endorse the privacy practices of Facebook or any linked websites. Your use of Facebook and any linked websites is at your own risk.
- Woodmansey Parish Council assumes no responsibility or liability for any injury, loss or damage incurred as a result of any use or reliance upon the information and material contained within or downloaded from these websites.
- The Parish Council website may be occasionally taken off the internet for maintenance purposes – every effort will be made to communicate this fact to the public. Facebook may also occasionally be unavailable, and we accept no responsibility for this lack of service.
- Woodmansey Parish Council is strictly non-political, and we will not engage in/with (and we actively discourage posts or comments on), issues of a political nature. At a national or local level
- By choosing to comment and/or utilise any Woodmansey Parish Council Social Media site, users are deemed to agree to this policy.