



**SOMPTING**  
[www.sompting.org.uk](http://www.sompting.org.uk)  
**PARISH COUNCIL**

---

# **SOMPTING PARISH COUNCIL**

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

### **2023**

Agreed by Sompting Parish Council  
10<sup>th</sup> May 2023

# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

## What is Social Media?

'Social media' is the term commonly given to websites and online tools allowing users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. This interaction can 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. [www.london2012.com/blog](http://www.london2012.com/blog))
- micro-blogging (e.g. [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com))
- wikis (e.g. [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org))
- social bookmarking (e.g. [www.delicious.com](http://www.delicious.com))

## Council Use of Social Media

### Principles

- To publish information about the work of the Parish Council to a wider audience.
- **Not** to enter into online debates on the work of the Council.
- Social Media must **NOT** be used in the recruitment process for employees or Councillors as this could lead to privacy, potential discrimination claims and also data protection issues, with the exception of placing vacancy advertisements.

### Approved Council Social Media

- Parish Council website [www.sompting.org.uk](http://www.sompting.org.uk)

### Users of Council Social Media

- In accordance with the Council's adopted Standing Orders, the Parish Clerk is the Council's nominated Press Officer authorised to issue press releases.

### Guidance for Officers on the Use of Council Social Media

- Officers should know the terms of use on third party websites, e.g. Facebook.
- **No** information should be published that is not already in the public domain, e.g. already available on the Council's website.

- Information should be factual, fair, thorough and transparent.
- Be mindful that this information may stay in the public domain ad infinitum.
- Respect copyright laws.
- Do **not** publish or report on conversations that are meant to be private or internal without permission.
- Do **not** reference other organisations without their approval. When you do make a reference, link back to the source where possible.
- Do **not** publish anything that would not be acceptable in the workplace.
- Remember that you are an ambassador for the Council and be cordial at all times.

## **Third Party Social Media and Councillor Usage**

Relevant social media

- Linked in

## **Usage of Third Party Media in your Official Capacity as a Parish Councillor**

You will need to think about whether you are acting as a Councillor, or giving the impression that you are representing your authority. The Council has adopted a Code of Members Conduct which is binding for all members of the Council.

### **Do**

- Be clear any comments you post are your own personal views and not those of the Council
- Set appropriate privacy settings for your blog or networking site – especially if you have a private, non-political blog
- Keep an eye out for defamatory or obscene posts from others on your blog or page and remove them as soon as possible to avoid the perception that you condone such views
- Be aware that the higher your profile as a Councillor, the more likely it is you will be seen as acting in your official capacity when you blog or network
- Ensure you use Council facilities appropriately; if you use a Council provided blog site or social networking area, any posts you make are likely to be viewed as made in your official capacity
- Be aware that by publishing information that you could not have accessed without your position as a Councillor you are likely to be seen as acting in Parish your official capacity.
- Make political points if you wish, but be careful about being too specific or personal if referring to individuals. An attack on individuals may be seen as disrespectful, whereas general comments about another party or genuine political expression is less likely to be viewed as disrespect.

### **Don't**

- Blog in haste.
- Post comments that you would not be prepared to make in writing or face to face or could leave you open to allegations of libel.
- Use Council facilities for personal or political blogs.

**Remember:**

The Council has adopted a Code of Conduct and if you use social media in your official capacity as a Parish Councillor or may be perceived to be acting in your official capacity, you should be mindful of the seven Nolan principles of the public life: Selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Agreed Sompting Parish Council  
10<sup>th</sup> May 2023