

Fawley Parish Council

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Purpose and Scope

As the online landscape continues to mature, the opportunities for Fawley Parish Council councillors and employees to communicate with the general public, each other and the world are evolving. Social media creates opportunities to champion the council and for personal expression, but it also creates risks and responsibilities. You should assume that anything you do on social media – whether on a council, councillor or personal account – could be viewed by a colleague, supervisor, partner, supplier, community member or potential customer. Your activity on social media reflects on Fawley Parish Council and can impact the council environment, and, subject to applicable law, will not be exempt from this policy just because it occurred on a personal account or as a Fawley Parish Council councillor or employee.

Related Policies and Consequence of Violations

As a Fawley Parish Council team member, you are expected to adhere to this policy on social media, including but not limited to Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, WeChat, YouTube, Flickr, Twitch, blogs, wikis or any other tool or service that facilitates interactions over the internet.

This policy supplements other Fawley Parish Council policies and standards. If your post would violate a Fawley Parish Council policy in another forum, it will also violate it on social media. Employees who breach this or other Fawley Parish Council policies may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment in accordance with the local laws. Elected members may be subject to a complaint to the monitoring officer

Five Social Media Principles

As a Fawley Parish Council team member (employees and councillors), you are required to follow these five principles in your social media activity that could relate you to the Council.

- **Be Nice, Have Fun and Connect!**

Consistent with our policies, every Fawley Parish Council team member must be respectful to others when conducting business on behalf of Fawley Parish Council or when they identify or could be identified as a Fawley Parish Council team member. Remember, even when you are on a personal account, your social media activity could be seen by community members, so you should treat every interaction on social media as if you are dealing with a member of the public. While we value employee privacy and a diversity of perspectives across our team, Fawley Parish Council **has zero**

tolerance for racism, bigotry, misogyny, express or implied threats of harassment or physical harm, or hate speech. “Hate speech” includes any speech – or endorsement or promotion of speech – that is derogatory toward a group of people based on a protected classification. This can include race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexuality, caste, gender or disability. For example, speech that dehumanises, ridicules, or condones or promotes violence against a protected class of people is hate speech.

How you say something can matter as much as what you say. You should not bully, harass or threaten violence against anyone on or outside of social media. If you find yourself in a disagreement on social media, use a respectful tone or disengage.

- **Protect Information**

You are also prohibited from sharing customer or team member personally identifiable information on external social media sites; this includes data that councillors choose not to make known to the public. The same standards apply on social media. **For example, if you engage with a community member about a complaint or issue on social media, you should not include any identifying information about that person or their order (e.g., order number) in your posts.** You must never post personal information about someone else on social media without their permission. This could cause damage to that person, to your reputation and relationships, and to Fawley Parish Council, and could even result in a claim against yourself and the Council.

- **Be Transparent and Disclose**

If you talk about Fawley Parish Council on social media, you should disclose that you work for, or are elected to, Fawley Parish Council. Your friends may know your association with the Council, but their network of friends and colleagues may not, and you don't want to accidentally mislead someone. You should use the #FawleyParishCouncil in any post that discusses Fawley Parish Council. The disclosure needs to be in a place that is hard to miss, so simply having it in your bio, buried between two other hashtags, or in a place that requires the viewer to click or go somewhere else to see the disclosure is not enough. You should include the hashtag regardless of your privacy settings and adhere to any additional disclosure.

- **Follow the Law, Follow the Code of Conduct**

To avoid violating safeguarding and privacy issues, trademark, copyright, or publicity rights, do not post images or other content without the consent of those who own or appear in the media. When you quote others, be sure to credit them and, if appropriate, add a link. You are also personally responsible for complying with any terms of the social media platform you are using. These terms differ across platforms and can

include detailed community standards. You should familiarise yourself with the terms and standards for each platform you use.

- **Be Responsible**

Make sure you're engaging in social media conversations the right way. Your communications should typically reflect your area of expertise, particularly if you are communicating with a community member or otherwise about or on behalf of **Fawley Parish Council**. If you encounter questions or issues on social media, contact your **line manager** for review and support.

All team members are encouraged to speak about the council and share news and information, but only authorised people may speak on behalf of **Fawley Parish Council** and issue official council responses. If you see something being shared related to **Fawley Parish Council** on a social media platform that shouldn't be happening, immediately inform your line manager, or the **Chairman of Council** if you are an elected member or some other appropriate contact. And always remember that anything posted in social media can go viral or be screenshotted, reshared or reposted as there is very little privacy protection for anything shared on social media, no matter what your privacy settings may be.

If you mistakenly post something on a social media platform, it will be hard to delete completely. So be sure you're only posting content you would feel comfortable showing up in your line managers inbox, a councillors Twitter or Instagram feed, or the front page of a major news site. You should avoid posting content that might contain legal conclusions, intellectual property that belongs to other companies, or defamatory or inflammatory language. Everything you post online can be traced back to you, so be sure what you post is appropriate before you post it. Your post might be shared with others and archived even if you delete it later. Even if you put something in your bio about your content being just your own, that might not stop someone else online from complaining about your activity and noting that you work for **Fawley Parish Council**

Social Media Account Ownership

If you participate in social media activities as part of paid employment at **Fawley Parish Council** on an account created for that purpose, that account is considered **Fawley Parish Council's** property and remains so if you leave the council — meaning you must not try to change the password or the account name or create a similar sounding account or assert any ownership of the account or the contacts and connections you have gained through the account. Any materials created for or posted on the account will remain **Fawley Parish Council** property. This doesn't apply to personal accounts that you may access at work but does apply to all **Fawley Parish Council** and affiliate

council branded accounts. If you have any questions about an account you operate, please contact your line manager to discuss the account.