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**ORMESBY ST MARGARET WITH SCRATBY PARISH COUNCIL**

 **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

1. **Parish Council Use of Social Media – Principles**

Social Media is used:

i. To publish information about the work of Ormesby St Margaret with Scratby Parish Council (‘the Council’) and to engage parishioners with the work of the Council and promote our community positively

ii. To clarify the Council's position on any Council business.

**2. Approved Parish Council Social Media**

The Parish Council has approved the use of Facebook and Twitter and the Parish Council website to promote its work and to communicate its approved messages .

The Council Facebook page can be found at:

https://www.facebook.com

The Parish Council Twitter page can be found at:

https://twitter.com/home

The website can be found at:

**3. Parish Council Media and Social Media management**

The Clerk or Chair (or in their absence, the Vice Chair) are authorised to issue approved official press releases. The Chair (or in their absence, the Vice Chair) is authorised to speak to the press. In doing so all commentary shall be restricted to the decided views of the council on the issue at hand.

The Clerk is nominated to post updates to social media pages. Additional editors may be added from time to time by resolution of the Council. All posts by such editors must be in accordance with this policy.

**4. Communications from the Council will meet the following criteria:**

* Be civil, tasteful and relevant;
* Not contain content that is knowingly unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive;
* Not contain content knowingly copied from elsewhere, for which we do not own the copyright;
* Not contain any personal information.
* If it is official Council business it will be moderated by either the Chair, Vice Chair of the Council or the Clerk to the Council;
* Social media will not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising and will at all times respect electoral rules and restrictions.

**5. Guidance for Parish Councillors on the use of Social Media**

1. Councillors and Officers should be familiar with formal Terms of Use on third party websites – e.g. Facebook – and adhere to these at all times.
2. Information not already in the public domain (e.g., available on the Parish Council's website or published in Minutes) should not be published without the prior approval of the Clerk.
3. Published information should be factual, fair, thorough and transparent.
4. Awareness that published information may remain in the public domain indefinitely, without the opportunity for retrieval/deletion, is essential
5. Copyright laws must be respected.
6. Private conversations or internal reports should not be published without permission of the Clerk.
7. Other organisations should not be referenced without their approval. If referenced, there should be a link back to the original source.
8. Anything regarded in the workplace as unacceptable should not be published. Use of social media must at all times comply with the Council’s Code of Conduct, anti-harassment and anti-bullying policy, equal opportunities and diversity policy and in all respects the law.
9. Officers and Councillors are seen as ambassadors for the Council and should always act in a responsible and socially aware manner.
10. We retain the right to remove comments or content that includes:
* Obscene or racist content
* Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
* Potentially libellous statements.
* Plagiarised material; any material in violation of any laws, including copyright
* Private, personal information published without consent
* Information or links unrelated to the content of the forum
* Commercial promotions or spam
* Alleged breach of a Council’s policy or the law.

xi In monitoring social media posts and requiring where appropriate pre-approval by the Council editorial team prior to publishing, the Council will not publish posts not meeting the above criteria.

xii The Council’s response to any communication received not meeting the above criteria will be to either ignore, inform the sender of our policy or send a brief response as appropriate. This will be at the Council’s discretion based on the message received, given our limited resources available. Any information posted on social media in line with the above criteria will be removed as quickly as practically possible. Repeat offenders will be blocked from the relevant page. If necessary the Council may post a statement that ‘*A post breaching the Council’s Social Media Policy has been removed*’.

xiii If a post alleges a breach of a Council’s policy or the law the person who posted it will be asked to submit a formal complaint to the Council or report the matter to the Police as soon as possible to allow due process.

**6 Parish Council Website.**

Where necessary, we may direct those contacting us to our website to see the required information set out thereon, or we may forward their question to one of our Councillors for consideration and response. We may not respond to every comment we receive particularly if we are experiencing a heavy workload.

**7 Parish Council email and formal communications with the council**

i Sending a message or post via Facebook or Twitter 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 these channels. Instead, please make direct contact with the council’s Clerk or members of the council by email.

ii The Clerk to the council has their own council email address: clerk@ormesby.org.

The email account is monitored mainly during office hours, Monday to Friday, and we aim to reply to all questions sent as soon as we can. An ‘out of office’ message should be used when appropriate.

iii The Clerk is responsible for dealing with email received and passing on any relevant mail to members or external agencies for information and/or action. All communications on behalf of the Council will usually come from the Clerk, and/or otherwise will always be copied to the Clerk. All new emails requiring data to be passed on, will be followed up with a Data consent form for completion before action is taken with that correspondence.

Councillors are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct and the Data Protection Act in all their work on behalf of the Council.As more and more information becomes available at the press of a button, it is vital that all information is treated sensitively and securely. Councillors are expected to maintain an awareness of the confidentiality of information that they have access to and not to share confidential information with anyone. Failure to properly observe confidentiality may be seen as a breach of the Council’s Code of Conduct and will be dealt with through its prescribed procedures.

**8 Third party Social Media and Individual Councillor Usage**

When acting in a private capacity in making commentary on social media, councillors and officers should avoid giving any impression they are acting on behalf of the Council. Councillors should always be clear when they are acting as a councillor as opposed to in a private capacity.

The Council has adopted a Code of Conduct which is binding and, when using Social Media in their official capacity, councillors and officers should be mindful of the Code, and the seven Nolan principles applicable to holding public office.

Guidelines:

• Set appropriate privacy settings for any blog or networking site.

• Beware of defamatory or obscene posts from others on any blog or page, and remove as soon as possible to avoid any perception such views are condoned.

• Councillors, particularly those with a higher profile, should be aware that any views posted could be interpreted as comment made in an official capacity on a blog or network.

• Any information accessed as a Parish Councillor or Officer, not already in the public domain, should not be published.

• As a councillor or officer ‘political’ points and specific or personal comments about individuals should be avoided.

• Blogging in haste or making comments unlikely to be said in face-to-face contact should be avoided.

• Council facilities should not be used for personal or political purposes.

***I hereby acknowledge receipt of the Council’s Social Media Policy, as adopted, and undertake to be bound by its requirements.***

***\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ signed***

***\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ dated***