

# Great Aycliffe Town Council



## Social Media Acceptable Use Policy

<b>Author of Policy:</b>	Chrissy Walton	
<b>Policy Effective from :</b>	April 2015	
<b>Revision Dates :</b>	Nov 2016	

## **SOCIAL MEDIA ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

The Council's social networks have been set up to provide information on news, events and jobs for residents, businesses and visitors.

The will usually only be monitored during the usual Town Council opening hours.

Most online communities (i.e. Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan) have their own rules and guidelines, which you should always follow. The Council reserve the right to remove any contributions that break the rules or guidelines of the relevant community which forms part of the Town Council social network.

You should always:-

- Be tasteful, tactful and relevant
- Do not post messages that are unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually orientated or racially offensive
- Do not swear or use abusive language
- Do not post the same message, or very similar messages, more than once (spamming)
- Do not publicise your, or anyone else's, personal information, such as contact details unless it is required for the actual 'post' (i.e. job adverts)
- Do not advertise products or services
- Do not impersonate someone else
- Do not distribute photographic images of children other than when properly obtained and with consent

### **Social Networking - Employees**

Social networking sites must only be accessed during your breaks.

The exception to this is any employee who has permission to post news to the Council's website, or to the Twitter or Facebook pages, however, adverse or negative comments regarding the Council, its policies, services, employees or councillors is still prohibited.

### **Regardless of WHEN or WHERE you access social networking sites you MUST NOT**

1. Share any Council information which includes names of colleagues including senior managers or elected members
2. Share or distribute photographic images or videos obtained of colleagues or taken initially for council purposes.
3. Refer to the council, its employees, its services or any of its practices in derogatory terms.
4. Make comments and/or use abusive or profane language that could reflect adversely on the reputation of the Council.

Infringements of the points above will result in an investigation under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure and may result in your dismissal.

In respect of volunteers and students on placement, their engagement with the Council will be terminated and the School/College/Training provider will be informed of the circumstances.

## **Social Networking – Councillors**

The Council recognise that some Councillors use social networking as a way to inform residents about their work and the work of the Council. Councillors should not:-

1. Share any Council information which includes names of employees or elected members unless it is pertinent/essential to the discussion.
2. Share or distribute photographic images or videos obtained of colleagues or taken initially for council purposes.
3. Refer to the council, its employees, its services or any of its practices in derogatory terms.
4. Make comments and/or use abusive or profane language that could reflect adversely on the reputation of the Council.

Councillors should abide by the Members Code of Conduct for Great Aycliffe Town Council.

## **Following on Twitter and retweeting**

Our follow policy on twitter is based on relevance and usefulness to the council but does not mean we endorse any individual or organisation or any comments they make on Twitter.

The Council will only Retweet (RT) messages from feeds or share posts on Facebook which the Council follows if it believes it will be helpful or interesting for our followers.

## **Defamation**

Please take care not to make defamatory statements. In law this means a statement that lowers the reputation of a person or organisation in the eyes of a reasonable person. By publishing such a statement you and the Council can both get into serious trouble. The Council will therefore take down any statement that could be deemed to be defamatory.

All employees should be aware that infringements of this policy may also lead to litigation under criminal and civil law.

## **Pre-election period**

In the six week run up to a local election - councils have to be very careful not to do or say anything that could be seen in any way to support any political party or candidate. The Council will continue to publish important service announcements using social media but may have to remove responses if they are overtly party political.