Social Media Policy

1. Purpose
This policy provides guidance on the management and use of official social media platforms operated by Lytchett Matravers Parish Council. It ensures online communications are accurate, professional, and compliant with legal obligations.

2. Scope
This policy applies to the Parish Clerk and any authorised officer responsible for managing official Council social media accounts.

Councillors do not administer, access, or post content on official Council social media accounts.

3. Objectives
- Ensure social media is used responsibly to share information with the community.
- Protect the Council's reputation and maintain public trust.
- Ensure compliance with legal requirements including data protection, copyright, and defamation law.
- Maintain clear separation between official Council communications and personal social media use.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Full Council
- Approve and review the Social Media Policy.
- Determine the Council's approach to public communications.

4.2 Parish Clerk (Account Administrator)
- Act as the sole administrator of official Council social media accounts unless otherwise resolved by Full Council.
- Ensure all content is accurate, appropriate, and consistent with Council decisions and policies.
- Monitor engagement and respond to comments or messages where appropriate.
- Maintain security of account credentials.
- Ensure compliance with data protection requirements (GDPR).

5. Official Council Accounts
- Official Council social media accounts are managed only by the Parish Clerk or another officer authorised by Full Council.
- Councillors do not have access to account credentials and do not post on behalf of the Council.
- All content must reflect Council decisions, services, or publicly available information.
- Accounts must be clearly identified as official Council accounts.

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6. Content Guidelines

- Posts must be factual, respectful, and politically neutral.
- Confidential or sensitive information must not be shared.
- Copyrighted material must not be posted without permission.
- Responses to public comments must be professional and non-argumentative.

7. Councillors' Personal Social Media Use

- Councillors may use personal social media accounts in a private capacity.
- Personal views must not be presented as representing the Council.
- Councillors must not imply they are authorised to speak on behalf of the Council online.
- Confidential Council information must not be disclosed.

8. Legal and Regulatory Compliance

- All Council social media activity must comply with relevant legislation including:
- Data Protection legislation (UK GDPR)
- Defamation law
- Copyright law
- Equality legislation

Offensive, discriminatory, or defamatory content must not be published.

9. Monitoring and Enforcement

- The Parish Clerk will monitor official accounts to ensure compliance with this policy.
- Any misuse or breach will be addressed by the Council in accordance with relevant procedures.

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation, guidance from NALC, or Council operations.

Adopted by: Lytchett Matravers Parish Council

Date: 25th February 2026

Minute Reference: 5.3

Next Review Date: March 2027

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