



Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council

Social Media Policy

Adopted by Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council on: 14th October 2021

Reviewed on: 11th July 2023

Review Date: 2026

INTRODUCTION

This Policy is intended to help staff and members of Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council make appropriate decisions about the use of social media.

This Policy introduces various forms of social media, highlights some of the pitfalls to avoid, outlines the standards which should be observed when using social media, the circumstances in which use of social media will be monitored, and the action which will be taken in respect of breaches of this Policy.

All Councillors and employees are expected to comply with this policy at all times to protect the privacy, confidentiality and interests of Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council and any individual, or organisation, Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council is dealing with.

Only those persons authorised by the Council are permitted to post material, or use the Council's logo, heading or imagery on social media in the Council's name and on its behalf. The Parish Office or any councillor delegated by the Parish Council, will be the administrators on the social media platforms.

What is social media?

Social media describes a range of online services which provide easy ways to create and publish on the internet. The term is generally used to describe how content (i.e., text, video and pictures) can be shared and discussed online. As a result, social media is changing the way in which Councillors and Councils interact with local people.

Examples of social media:

- (i) Facebook: a social networking website, allows users to create profiles, upload photos and videos, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. It includes public features such as Marketplace, Events, Groups
- (ii) Twitter: microblogging and social media networking site
- (iii) Instagram: social networking app for sharing photos and videos from a smartphone
- (iv) YouTube: video sharing website
- (v) LinkedIn: Professional networking. Business and employment orientated

Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council has the following Social Media pages:

<https://www.facebook.com/CranbrookandSissinghurstPC>

<https://www.facebook.com/CranbrookCC>

Twitter: @CranSissParish

<https://www.instagram.com/cranbrooksissinghurstpc/>

The Council also uses email (including Mailchimp) and has a website to communicate. The Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications. Over time the Council may add to the channels of communication that it uses as it seeks to improve and expand the services it delivers. When these changes occur, this Policy will be updated to reflect the new arrangements.

The Council social media pages intend to provide information and updates within our Parish and promote our community positively.

Avoiding trouble with social media

- What is said is permanently published to the world
- Posts can easily be misinterpreted and taken out of context
- Follow appropriate internet security – losing control of social media account to a hacker can lead to inappropriate comments being published in the council's name
- Arguments should be avoided, but disagreements are admissible

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.
- Social media will not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising.

In order to ensure that all discussions on social media platforms are productive, respectful and consistent with the Council's aims and objectives, we ask you to follow these guidelines:

- Be considerate and respectful of others. Vulgarity, threats or abuse of language will not be tolerated.
- Differing opinions and discussion of diverse ideas are encouraged, but personal attacks on anyone, including the Council members or staff, will not be permitted.
- Share freely and be generous with official Council posts, but be aware of copyright laws; be accurate and give credit where credit is due.
- Stay on topic.
- Refrain from social media for commercial purposes or to advertise market or sell products.
- Not bring the council into disrepute, including through content posted in a personal capacity

The council's social media sites are not monitored 24/7 and we are not able to reply to messages received. However, we will endeavour to ensure that any emerging themes or helpful suggestions are passed to the relevant people.

Sending a message via social media or commenting on a post will not be considered as contacting the Parish Council for official purposes and we will not be obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through any Social Media channel. Instead, please contact the Clerk on email: clerk@CSPC.org.uk

or in writing to: The Parish Clerk, Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council Parish, The Old Fire Station, Stone Street, Cranbrook, KENT, TN17 3HF

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.

Non-compliance will not be tolerated and can result in being blocked from any Parish Council Social Media platform

The Parish Council is not responsible for the accuracy of content posted by any subscriber to any forum; opinions expressed in comments on the Parish Council's social media forums do not necessarily represent those of Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council.

All comments, once posted, become the property of Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council and we reserve the right to reproduce, distribute, publish, display or edit. Derivative work can also be created from such postings or content, and used for any purpose, in any form and on any other media.

Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council is not responsible, liable for and does not endorse the privacy practices of any Social Media platform or any other linked websites.

Your use of Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council social media platforms and any linked websites are at your own risk.

Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council assumes no responsibility or liability for any injury, loss or damage incurred as a result of any use or reliance upon the information and material contained within or downloaded from any websites.

Social Media platforms may occasionally be unavailable and Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council accepts no responsibility for this lack of service.

Only public events will be published/shared on Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council's social media pages.

No commercial activities will be published/shared on Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council's social media pages. Charity events will be advertised at the discretion of the council.

The presence of any advertisement on these Social Media platforms is not an endorsement of the authenticity or quality of the goods, services or website and Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council will not be held responsible for any claims arising in that respect.

We will not engage in/with, and we discourage posts or comments on, issues of a political nature.

Comments should not advertise commercial products or services.

By choosing to comment and/or utilise any Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council Social Media site, users are deemed to agree to this policy.

This Policy may be revised at any time.