

**Communications Policy (including Social Media and Press) (v1.0)**  
**(Applies to all written and verbal communication)**

(Adopted by Council on 10 June 2019)

The aim of this policy is to set out a Code of Practice for Communications including the use of Social Media and speaking to the Press. The policy applies to Councillors and Employees of Flax Bourton Parish Council.

**Code of Practice**

All forms of communication, whether written or verbal, represents the Parish Council and must be communicated in a professional manner. When using all forms of communication, Councillors and Employees must be mindful of the information they post in a Parish Council capacity and keep the tone of any communication informative and respectful.

If the communication is the view of the Parish Council, this should generally be delivered by the Clerk from the Flax Bourton Parish Council address. If an individual is expressing a personal opinion on an issue, this must be made clear in the communication.

If expressing or supporting the view of the Parish Council, this must have been a view agreed at a previous Parish Council meeting. Any communication in advance of matters being debated by the Parish Council at a Council Meeting may constitute pre-disposition, pre-determination or bias and may require the individual to declare an interest at Council meetings. Anyone with concerns about content placed on social media that in anyway denigrates Parish Councillors, employees of the Council or residents should report this to the Clerk of the Council.

Offline and online content should always be accurate, objective, balanced and informative. Parish Councillors and Employees should not;

- Present personal opinions as those of the Parish Council
- Post content that is contrary to the decisions made by the Parish Council
- Post controversial or inflammatory remarks
- Engage in personal attacks, online disagreements or hostile communications
- Hide their identity using false names or pseudonyms
- Bring the Parish Council into disrepute

**Social Media**

This policy covers all forms of social media and social networking sites, which include, but are not limited to;

- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- YouTube
- WhatsApp
- Instagram

- Blog sites and forums and other social networking sites

Social Media should generally be used for the following purposes;

- Distribute Parish Council agendas, post minutes and issue dates of meetings
- Advertise Parish Council events and activities
- Announce new information from the Parish Council
- Promote links to news stories on the Flax Bourton Parish Council website
- Advertise Parish Council vacancies
- Share information from other related Council authorities, schools, community groups and charities.

## Media Policy

If any Councillor or Employee of Flax Bourton Parish Council is approached by the media, please refer to the Clerk of the Parish Council. Councillors or Employees of the Council should not speak to the media without having referred to the Clerk first.

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This is a non-contractual policy and procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

Approved at Parish Council Meeting	10 June 2019	Minute Ref	7
Policy version reference:	v1.0	Date for next review	May 2021