

# WHITEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

**Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer:** Marlene Jewell  
Telephone: 01946 67366  
**Chairman:** Councillor Brian O’Kane

To: **Members of Whitehaven Town Council**

You are duly **SUMMONED** to attend a **VIRTUAL MEETING** of **WHITEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL** which will be held on **Friday 7th August 2020** at **6:00pm** on the **Zoom Platform** to transact the business contained in the attached Agenda.

The Meeting takes place under the authorisation scheme outlined in the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) (Regulations) 2020.

**Join Zoom Meeting:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84925058234?pwd=c2liOXhuK1REaGpZTFk2MWp1SnppZz09>

**Meeting ID: 849 2505 8234**

**Password: 741020**

Signed.....*Marlene Jewell*..... Dated.....*3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020*.....  
Marlene Jewell, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

## AGENDA

All Councillors and members of the public attending the virtual meeting should be aware that by joining the meeting they are agreeing to the following guidelines:

- a) The meeting may be recorded for the purpose of minute taking and will be disposed of within 24 hours;
- b) All attendees should have their microphones on mute;
- c) To adhere to the Council’s Code of Conduct and Standing Orders;
- d) Only unmute microphones when invited to do so;
- e) Speak clearly and look into the camera;
- f) Turn phones to silent;
- g) Be aware of time lags and allow time for participants to respond;
- h) Introduce themselves when raising a point;
- i) Respond to the Chair when their name is called;
- j) Be aware of your background and what others can see behind you

**1. Apologies for Absence**

**2. Declarations of Interest**

To receive declarations of interest by elected Members in respect of Agenda items.

If a Member requires any advice on any item involving a possible declaration of interest which could affect his/her ability to speak and/or vote he/she is advised to contact the Clerk at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

**3. Public Participation**

**4. Social Media Policy**

**Social Media Policy**

**Purpose of the Report and Recommendation**

To consider a draft Social Media Policy and to make decisions in accordance with paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Certain Councillors have raised issues regarding the use by Councillors of social media for Council business or for airing disputes.
- 1.2 A draft Social Media Policy is attached for consideration at Appendix 1

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Council considers whether to adopt the draft Social Media Policy with or without amendment.
- 2.2 If the decision is to adopt the Policy then to decide if Councillors be required to sign the Social Media Policy to state that they have received, read, understood and will comply with it.

# WHITEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The aim of this policy is to set out a Code of Practice to provide guidance to Town Councillors, Council staff and others who engage with the council using online communications, collectively referred to as social media.

Social media is a collective term used to describe methods of publishing on the internet.

This policy covers all forms of social media and social networking sites which include (but are not limited to):

- Town Council Website
- Facebook, Myspace and other social networking sites
- Twitter and other micro blogging sites
- Youtube and other video clips and podcast sites
- LinkedIn
- Bloggs and discussion forums
- Email

The use of social media does not replace existing forms of communication.

The principles of this policy apply to Town Councillors and Council staff and also applies to others communicating with the Town Council.

The current Code of Conduct applies to online activity in the same way it does to other written or verbal communication.

Individual Town Councillors and Council staff are responsible for what they post in a Council and personal capacity.

In the main, Councillors and Council staff have the same legal duties online as anyone else, but failure to comply with the law may have more serious consequences.

Social media may be used to

- Distribute agendas, post minutes and dates of meetings
- Advertise events and activities
- Good news stories linked website or press page
- Vacancies
- Re-tweet or share information from partner agencies such as Principal Authorities, Police, Library, Health etc.
- Announcing new information
- Post or Share information from other parish related community groups such as schools, sports clubs, community groups and charities
- Refer resident queries to the clerk and all other councillors

## **CODE OF PRACTICE**

When using social media (including email) Town Councillors and Council staff must be mindful of the information they post in both a personal and council capacity and keep the tone of any comments respectful and informative.

Online content should be accurate, objective, balanced and informative.

Town Councillors and Council staff must not:

- hide their identity using false names or pseudonyms
- present personal opinions as that of the Council
- present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment to the council
- post content that is contrary to the democratic decisions of the council
- post controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks
- engage in personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications
- use an individual's name unless given written permission to do so
- publish photographs or videos of minors without parental permission
- post any information that infringes copyright of others
- post any information that may be deemed libel
- post online activity that constitutes bullying or harassment
- bring the Council into disrepute, including through content posted in a personal capacity
- post offensive language relating to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age, religion or belief
- conduct any online activity that violates laws, regulations or that constitutes a criminal offence

Publishing untrue statements about a person which is damaging to their reputation is libel and can result in a court action and fine for damages.

This also applies if someone else publishes something libellous on your social media site. A successful libel claim will result in an award of damages against you.

Posting copyright images or text on social media sites is an offence. Breach of copyright will result in an award of damages against you.

Publishing personal data of individuals without permission is a breach of Data Protection legislation is an offence.

Publication of obscene material is a criminal offence and is subject to a custodial sentence.

Councillors views posted in any capacity in advance of matters to be debated by the Council at a Council or Committee meeting may constitute Pre-disposition, Pre-determination or Bias and may require the individual to declare an interest at Council meetings

Anyone with concerns regarding content placed on social media sites that denigrate Town councillors, Council staff or residents should report them to the Clerk of the Council.

Misuse of social media content that is contrary to this and other policies could result in action being taken.

The Council will appoint a nominated person as Administrator of the Town Council social media output and be responsible for posting and monitoring content to ensure it complies with the Social Media Policy.

The Administrator will have authority to remove any posts made by third parties from Council social media pages which are deemed to be of a defamatory or insulting nature.