

# Old Bolingbroke With Hareby Parish Council

## Social Media Policy

Adopted April 2021  
Reviewed Mar 2025  
Next review Mar 2029

What is Social Media?

'Social media' is the term commonly given to websites and online tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way, by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. This interaction may be through computers, mobile phones and i-Pads.

Examples of social media websites include:

Social networking – [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

Video sharing – [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

Micro-blogging - [www.x.com](http://www.x.com)

Message boards - [www.bbc.co.uk/dna/mbsn/home](http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/mbsn/home)

Wikis- [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

Social - [www.delicious.com](http://www.delicious.com)

Council Use of Social Media

Principles

- To present a positive corporate image of the Council as an open and transparent organisation.
- To publish information about the work of Old Bolingbroke with Hareby Parish Council to a wider audience.
- To avoid entering into online debates or arguments about the Council's work. Social Media must NOT be used in the recruitment process for employees or new councillors - other than for the sole purpose of placing vacancy advertisements - as this could lead to potential discrimination and privacy actions, as well as breach of data protection issues.

Approved Council Social Media

<https://old-bolingbroke.parish.lincolnshire.gov.uk/>

@OldBolingbrokewithHareby

## Users of Council Social Media

- The Clerk (and the Chairman in the absence of the Clerk), is authorised to issue a press release via the Council website on behalf of the Council

### 1. Guidance for Council Officers on the use of Council Social Media

- Officers should be familiar with the terms of use on third party websites
- No information should be published that is not already known to be in the public domain – i.e. available on the Council's website, contained in minutes of meetings, stated in Council publicised policies and procedures, etc.
- Information that is published should be factual, fair, thorough and transparent.
- Everyone must be mindful that information published in this way may stay in the public domain indefinitely, without the opportunity for retrieval/deletion.
- Copyright laws must be respected.
- Conversations or reports that are meant to be private or internal must not be published without permission.
- Other organisations should not be referenced without their approval – when referencing, link back to the original source wherever possible.
- Do not publish anything that would be regarded in the workplace as unacceptable.
- Staff must remember that they will be seen as ambassadors for the Council, and should always act in a responsible and socially aware manner.

### 2. Third party Social Media and Individual Councillor Usage

Councillors using Social Media to engage with the public must exercise good judgement and common sense, and refrain from inflammatory comments.

Councillors need to think about whether they are acting in a private capacity, or whether any impression might be conveyed that they are acting for and on behalf of Old Bolingbroke with Hareby Parish Council. The Council has adopted a Code of Conduct which is binding on all members. If you use Social Media in your official capacity as a councillor, you should always be mindful of the Code, and of the seven Nolan principles applicable to holding public office – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Do:

- Set appropriate privacy settings for any blog or networking site

- Watch out for defamatory or obscene posts from others on any blog or page and remove them as soon as possible to avoid any perception that you condone such views
- Be aware that the higher your profile as a councillor, the more likely it is that you may be seen as acting in an official capacity when you blog or network
- Ensure any Council facilities are used appropriately – if using a Council-provided blog site or social networking area, any posts that you make are extremely likely to be viewed as being made in your official capacity
- Avoid publishing any information that you could only have accessed in your position as a councillor
- Be careful if making ‘political’ points, and avoid being specific or personal about individuals.

Don't:

- Blog in haste
- Post comments that you would not be prepared to make in writing or in face-to-face contact
- Use Council facilities for personal or political purposes