

# BUCKHURST HILL PARISH COUNCIL



## MEDIA POLICY NOVEMBER 2019

## 1. PURPOSE

1.1 This policy defines the rules governing the use of Buckhurst Hill Parish Council (BHPC) publishing media and social media accounts.

This policy relates to any media communication published by or on behalf of the council or any individual in their capacity as a councillor or officer or volunteer.

The use of media aims to improve and expand the ways in which the Parish Council communicates with its local residents, businesses and government agencies. It sets out what is and not acceptable usage of social media and complements the general rules of the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

'Media' is used here as a collective term to describe methods of publishing articles on the internet and to the press, such as:

- Facebook, LinkedIn and other social networking sites
- Twitter and other blogging sites
- Press Releases
- Parish Council magazines
- Discussion forums

1.2 Publishing media provides the BHPC with the opportunity to communicate to a wider audience in a range of subjects relating to:

- Training Courses
- News & Bulletins
- Events
- Relevant information from other sources
- Members stories, news and achievements

1.3 The BHPC encourages employees to publish media to support the goals and objectives of the BHPC.

1.4 A post or article may not be published or may be deleted if it relates to or contains:

- Politically motivated
- Profane language or content
- Illegal conduct or encouragement/ support of illegal activities
- Information that compromises the safety or security of the public
- Inappropriate content: pornography, racial or religious slur, gender specific comments, information encouraging criminal skills or terrorism, or material relating to gambling or illegal drugs
- Any text, image or other media that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or any other characteristic protected by law.
- Personal attacks or insults

- Potentially libellous statements
- Information or links unrelated to the content of the forum
- Plagiarized material, any material in violation of any laws, including copyright

## **2. SCOPE**

2.1 In order to ensure that all discussion on media accounts are productive, respectful and consistent with the BHPC aims and objectives, BHPC requires all employees and councillors to comply with the following criteria:

- Be considerate and respectful of others. Threats or abusive language will not be tolerated
- Share freely and be generous with official BHPC post, being aware of copyright laws
- Stay on topic
- Refrain from using the BHPC sites for commercial purpose or to advertise market or sell products
- Always receive consent from third parties prior to publishing stories or imagery.

## **3. STANDARDS**

3.1 Only authorized employees will have access to the login details for the BHPC social media accounts and will be able to publish on behalf of the BHPC. The login details for the accounts will be kept under the supervision of the Clerk.

The BHPC social media accounts are not monitored 24/7 however, the BHPC endeavours to ensure that any emerging themes or suggestions are passed to the relevant people or authorities.

The BHPC will hold and regularly update a media database of contacts to share press releases with local press and Local Parish/Town Council magazines.

The BHPC has created a press release template for employees to use whilst creating and publishing articles to keep a generic appearance throughout all publications.

## **4. PRINCIPLES**

4.1 Councillors must be clear if they are communicating on social media in their capacity as a councillor or private individual.

4.2 Councillors should not make commitments on behalf of the BHPC nor bring it into disrepute.

4.3 Councillors should not publish information that could only have been accessed by being a councillor.

4.4 Councillor should not say anything on social media or in other media formats which suggests they have made their mind up on an issue which is due to be formally decided.

4.5 Sending a message/post via social media will not be considered as contacting the Council for official purposes and the Council is not obliged to monitor or response to requests for information through these channels.

It is the Council's policy that all employees and Councillors of the Council will comply with this policy at all times to protect the reputation, privacy, confidentiality and interests of the BHPC.