



**Carn Brea Parish Council**

— Consel Plu Carn Bre —

# **Carn Brea Parish Council Social Media Policy**

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**Minute Number:** 25/02/10a

**1. Carn Brea Parish Council (CBPC) Policy statement**

- 1.1. This policy is intended to help employees including Clerks, RFO's, Executive Officers, part-time, fixed-term and casual employees (collectively referred to as employees in this policy), volunteers and Councillors of Carn Brea Parish Council make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as blogs, social networking websites, forums, message boards, or comments on web-articles, such as X, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn (or any other social media platform).
- 1.2. This policy outlines the standards CBPC requires employees, Councillors, and volunteers to observe when using social media, the circumstances in which the Council will monitor the use of social media and the action the Council will take in respect of breaches of this policy.

**2. The scope of the policy**

- 2.1. All employees, volunteers and Councillors are expected to comply with this policy at all times, to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the Council.
- 2.2. Any breach of this policy by employees may be dealt with under specific Disciplinary Procedures pertaining to contracts and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct which could lead to summary dismissal.
- 2.3. Any breach of this policy by Councillors may be dealt with as a potential breach of the Code of Conduct.

**3. Responsibility for implementation of the policy**

- 3.1. The Council has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.
- 3.2. The Clerk is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for changes to minimise risks to the Councils work.
- 3.3. All employees, volunteers and Councillors should ensure that they take the time to read and understand this policy. Any breach of this policy should be reported to the Clerk and CBPC Chair.
- 3.4. Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to Clerk.

**4. Using social media sites in our name**

- 4.1. Only the Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Administrative Assistant and other individuals appointed by CBPC at Full Council with the express agreement of the Clerk as Responsible Officer are permitted to post material on a social media platform in the Council's name and on our behalf.

**5. Using social media**

- 5.1. The Council recognises the importance of the internet in shaping public thinking about our Council and community. The Council also recognises the importance of our employees, volunteers and Councillors joining in and helping shape local government conversations and direction through interaction on social media.

- 5.2. Before using social media on any matter which might affect the interests of the Council you must:
- a) have read and understood this policy and have developed a good understanding of GDPR regulations and
  - b) employees, volunteers and Councillors must have sought and gained prior written approval to do so from the Clerk as the Responsible Officer.

6. **Rules for use of social media**

Whenever you are permitted to use social media in accordance with this policy, you must adhere to the following general rules:

- 6.1. Do not upload, post or forward a link to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content.
- 6.2. Any employee, volunteer or Councillor who feels that they have been harassed, bullied or are offended by material posted or uploaded by a colleague onto a social media website should inform the Clerk or CBPC Chair.
- 6.3. Never disclose commercially sensitive, personal, private or confidential information. If you are unsure whether the information you wish to share falls within one of these categories, you should discuss this with the Clerk as the Proper Officer responsible for GDPR compliance.
- 6.4. Do not upload, post or forward any content belonging to a third party unless you have that third party's consent.
- 6.5. Before you include a link to a third-party website, check that any terms and conditions of that website permit you to link to it.
- 6.6. When making use of any social media platform, you must read and comply with its terms of use.
- 6.7. Be honest and open but be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people's perceptions of the Council.
- 6.8. You are **personally** responsible for content **you** publish onto CBPC social media platforms.
- 6.9. Don't escalate heated discussions, try to be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations.
- 6.10. Don't discuss employees, volunteers or Councillors without their prior approval. This would breach GDPR regulations.
- 6.11. Always consider others' privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory e.g. private family matters and religion.
- 6.12. Avoid publishing your contact details where they can be accessed and used widely by people you did not intend to see them and never publish anyone else's contact details.

- 6.13 Do not share or re-post from another social media account without written consent from the Clerk as the Proper Officer.

## **7. Monitoring use of social media platforms**

- 7.1. Employees should be aware that any use of social media websites (whether or not accessed for Council purposes) may be monitored and, where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken against employees under the Council's Disciplinary Procedures.
- 7.2. Councillors should also be aware that breaches of this policy may be dealt with as a potential breach of the Code of Conduct.
- 7.3. Misuse of social media websites can, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or otherwise give rise to legal liability against you and the Council.
- 7.4. In particular, the uploading, posting, forwarding or sharing a link to any of the following types of material on a social media website, whether in a professional or personal capacity, could amount to gross misconduct (this list is not exhaustive):
- a) pornographic material (that is, writing, pictures, films and video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature);
  - b) a false and defamatory statement about any person or organisation;
  - c) material which is offensive / obscene;
  - d) criminal, discriminatory, derogatory or may cause embarrassment to the Council, volunteers, Councillors, or our employees;
  - e) confidential information about the Council or anyone else;
  - f) any other statement which is likely to create any liability (whether criminal or civil, and whether for you or the council); or
  - g) material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights, or which invades the privacy of any person.

Any such action will be addressed for employees under the Council's Disciplinary Procedures and for Councillors under the Code of Conduct and for employees may result in suspension and formal action being taken, leading up to and including summary dismissal.

- 7.5. Where evidence of misuse is found the Council may undertake a more detailed investigation in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Policy involving the examination and disclosure of monitoring records to those nominated to undertake the investigation and any witnesses, Line Managers or Councillors involved in the investigation. If necessary, such information may be handed to the Police in connection with a criminal investigation. In the case of misuse by a Councillor if the matter is dealt with under the Code of Conduct the investigation will be a matter for the Monitoring Officer.
- 7.6. If you notice any use of social media by other employees, volunteers or Councillors in breach of this policy please report it to the Clerk and CBPC Chair.

## **8. Monitoring and review of this policy**

- 8.1. The Clerk shall be responsible for reviewing this policy annually to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.