



# Kenilworth Town Council

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## **DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

*Date of Approval – 16/7/26*

*Date of Review – July 2029*

The aim of this Policy is to set out a Code of Practice to provide guidance to Staff and Town Councillors in the use of online communications, collectively referred to as digital and social media. This document will also reflect Kenilworth Town Council's intentions on how its website will be managed, and how the content, and links to external sites will be determined. This will apply to both the Town Council website and our 'Visit Kenilworth' website.

Digital and social media is a collective term used to describe methods of publishing on the internet. The policy covers all forms of digital media and social networking sites which include (but are not limited to):

### **Digital Media**

- Town Council website
- Town Council emails

### **Social Media**

Social Media applications include, but are not limited to:

- Social networking sites such as Facebook
- Microblogging applications, for example X
- Image and video sharing sites, such as YouTube, Flickr and Instagram
- Blogs, for example Blogger
- Video streaming services, such as Twitch
- Discussion forums, such as Reddit
- Instant Messaging services, such as Messenger, WhatsApp and Skype
- Reference sources such as Wikipedia

**Who does it apply to?**

The principles of the Policy apply to Town Councillors and all Council Staff (in their capacity as Councillors and Staff respectively). It is also intended for guidance for others communicating with the Town Council. The policy sits alongside relevant existing policies which need to be taken into consideration.

**Use of Digital and Social Media channels owned by Kenilworth Town Council**

The use of digital and social media does not replace existing forms of communication. The main media for the purpose of communicating information about the Town Council is our website. The website and other forms of social media will be used to enhance communication. Therefore, existing means of communication should continue with social media being an additional option.

**The Policy**

1. The Deputy Town Clerk will act as moderator for Council- owned digital and social channels. They will be responsible for overseeing posting and monitoring of the content ensuring it complies with the Digital and Social Media Policy. The moderator will have authority to remove any posts made by third parties from our social media pages which are deemed to be not in keeping with the policies and standards that the Town Council subjects itself to including those of a defamatory or libelous nature. Such posts will also be reported to the Hosts (i.e. Facebook) and also the Town Clerk.

2. The Council will appoint a nominated “Webmaster” to maintain and update the Town Council Website – [Kenilworth-tc.gov.uk](http://Kenilworth-tc.gov.uk).

3. The Webmaster is responsible for the structure and type of information provided on the website. The website and email communications media may be used to –

- Post minutes and dates of meetings
- Advertise events and activities
- Promote good news stories linked via website or press page
- Advertise Vacancies
- Post and communicate information from local partners i.e. Police, Library and Health etc.
- Announce new information.
- Post and communicate information from other Parish related community groups/clubs/associations/bodies e.g. Schools, sports clubs and community groups
- Refer resident queries to the clerk and all other councillors
- Other relevant information as agreed by the Webmaster & Town Clerk

4. The Council will not routinely allow commercial advertising/links on the website unless these are directly related to an activity within the town. However, local groups and organisations will be able to submit information in relation to their activities. Any request to link will be considered on its own merit.

Since external website contents may change or disappear entirely without notice, the Council cannot be held responsible for the content or accuracy of external websites. Should a link be made to other websites which are not under the control of the Council, we have no control over the nature, content and availability of those sites. The inclusion of any links does not necessarily imply a recommendation or endorse the views expressed within them.

5. **Social media** channels will be used to share the website information above with links referring to the Kenilworth Town Council website – Kenilworth-tc.gov.uk. These postings are to be authorised by the Town Clerk

6. **Emails** will be used to distribute information of council business.

7. Any member of staff making detrimental comments about Kenilworth Town Council or its Councillors will immediately be subject to disciplinary action.

8. The nominated moderator or moderators shall remove any negative posts which may contain personal and inflammatory remarks, libelous or defamatory information without further comment or notification.

9. Councillors or residents of Kenilworth who have any concerns regarding content placed on social media sites should report them to the Town Clerk. Misuse of such sites, in a manner that is contrary to this and other policies could result in action being taken.

10. Responses -Residents and Councillors should note that not all communication requires a response.

11. The Town Clerk and the moderators will be responsible for all final published responses.

12. If a matter needs further consideration it may be raised at a meeting of the Council. The poster will have been informed by way of response to this fact and also be invited to correspond with the Town Clerk directly.

13. If the moderator feels unable to answer a post for example of a contentious nature this shall be referred to the Town Clerk. The poster will have been informed by way of response to this fact and also be invited to correspond with the Town Clerk directly.

14. The Policy will be reviewed periodically.

### **Personal Guidance using Digital and Social Media**

15. Individual Town councillors are responsible for what they post on digital media, both in their personal capacity and as a Councillor. Councillors are personally responsible for any online activity conducted via their published e-mail address which is used for Council business. When using emails on Council business, Councillors must include an appropriate data privacy and protection statement and adhere to The Members' Code of Conduct. Councillors must not advertise businesses using their Councillor name.

16. When participating in any online communication which is in relation to Town Council business or as a Town Councillor, Councillors must:

a. Be responsible and respectful; be direct, informative and transparent.

b. Always disclose their identity and affiliation to the Town Council, i.e., being an elected Member of Town Council.

c. Never make false or misleading statements.

d. Be mindful of the information and should not present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment.

e. Ensure personal opinions are not published as being representative of the Town Council, bring the Town Council into disrepute or are contrary to the Council's Code of Conduct or any other Policies. Such breaches of the Code may lead to a Member's referral to WDC Standards

Committee.

f. If they identify themselves as such on digital media channels, it is recommended that, in the personal biography information, Councillors state “Opinions I express here are my personal views and not those of Kenilworth Town Council”

g. Refrain from posting potentially inflammatory remarks including use of language that may be deemed as offensive - relating in particular to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age or religion or belief must not be published on any social media site.

h. Avoid personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications.

i. Avoid the use of an individual’s name.

j. Permission to publish photographs or videos on digital media sites should be sought from the persons or organisations in the video or photograph before being uploaded. It is advised that if Councillors wish to distribute an image or video from an external source, that this is done by sharing or linking to the external source’s original post, image or video.

17. Respect the privacy of other Councillors and residents.

18. Do not post any information or conduct any online activity that may violate laws or regulations.

19. On proprietorial sites it must be clear if such sites are administered by a third party or by a Councillor. In the latter it should be clear from any post by a Councillor on issues relating to Council business that he/she is a Town Councillor.

20. If a Councillor is instructed by the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk to amend or remove any post on digital media by a Councillor, the necessary action must be taken within 12 hours of receipt of the instruction