

# SNETTISHAM PARISH COUNCIL – POLICIES

## **PRESS AND MEDIA POLICY**

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### **I GENERAL**

- 1) Council's Press Officer is the Clerk. He should:
  - a) Respond to queries from the Press, stating Council policy, if agreed, or using precedent from similar situations.
  - b) Inform Council on any occasions that such a statement has been issued, with a summary of his remarks.
  - c) Issue press releases, to inform the media of events of possible interest to them, relating to approved Council decisions, or by resolution of Council.
- 2) In the absence of the Clerk, the Chair may act as in 1 above.

### **II SOCIAL MEDIA**

*Social media is by its nature a more informal arena than the traditional press. It is also changing rapidly, is interactive, and cannot be continually monitored. Consequently, the use of discretion on the part of those monitoring the site should be expected, and Councillors are encouraged to visit regularly to be able to develop policy over time.*

- 1) The primary use of facebook<sup>1</sup> shall be to inform residents and others of Council activities.
- 2) Additionally, the Clerk should use it to provide information supplied by other public bodies, and local groups, which may be of interest.
- 3) The Clerk should monitor comments in order to answer questions and to ensure good order.
- 4) Exchanges with members of the Public are proper, if outlining or defending Council policy.
- 5) In the event of negative posts by visitors, the Clerk should attempt to correct misinformation, and explain Council reasons for decisions.
- 6) If, in the opinion of the Clerk, a post is defamatory to Council, individual councillors or members of the Public, or makes use of excessively strong language, he should remove it, informing the correspondent of the reason.
- 7) Should a correspondent persistently breach the terms of 6 above the Clerk should ban further posts from that person until such time that Council is assured there will be no repetition.

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<sup>1</sup> And additional social media platforms as may be used in future

8) If a “flame-storm” or similar occurs, the site may be suspended.

### **III COUNCILLORS & STAFF**

- 1) Councillors and staff may write or speak to the Press, or use social media, in a private capacity with no restriction.
- 2) They should not refer to their status within Council.
- 3) They should not speak on behalf of Council except as in 1 above.

*This policy was adopted as a working document at the Annual Meeting on 3<sup>d</sup> May 2017 to reviewed over time as to its efficacy and usefulness. Ref: 2017.05.03.12.e.iv*

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