**LOSTOCK GRALAM PARISH COUNCIL**

Social Media Policy

**Introduction**

The aim of this policy is to set out a Code of Practice to provide guidance to Lostock Gralam Parish Councillors, the Clerk and others who engage with the Parish Council using online

communications, collectively referred to as social media.

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

• Lostock Gralam Parish Council Website

• Lostock Gralam Parish Council Facebook Page and other social networking sites

• Twitter and other micro blogging sites

• YouTube and other video clips and podcast sites

• LinkedIn

• Bloggs and discussion forums

• Email

The use of social media does not replace existing forms of communication. The Parish Council website will remain the main media for the purpose of communicating information about the Parish Council. Other forms of social media such as Facebook will be used to enhance communication. Parish Council complaints should always to sent to the Parish Clerk either by email or in writing and not posted on social networking sites.

Lostock Gralam Parish Council’s use of Social Media may be used to:

• Distribute agendas, post minutes and dates of meetings

• Advertise events and activities

• Good news stories linked website or press page

• Vacancies

• Re-tweet or share information from partner agencies such as Principal Authorities, Police,

Library, Health etc.

• Announce new information to the community

• Post or share information from other parish related community groups such as schools,

sports clubs, community groups and charities

• Refer resident queries to the Clerk

**Code of Practice**

The Members’ Code of Conduct apply to online activity in the same way it does to other written or verbal communication. When using social media (including email) Lostock Gralam Parish Councillors and the Clerk must be mindful of the information they post in both a personal and a parish council capacity and keep the tone of any comments respectful and informative. Online content should be accurate, objective, balanced and informative.

**Restrictions on Use of Social Media**

Parish councillors and the Clerk must not:

• hide their identity using false names or pseudonyms

• present personal opinions as that of the Parish Council

• present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment to the Parish Council

• post content that is contrary to the democratic decisions of the Parish Council

• post controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks

• engage in personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications

• use an individual’s name unless given written permission to do so

• publish photographs or videos of minors without parental permission

• post any information that infringes copyright of others

• post any information that may be deemed libel

• post online activity that constitutes bullying or harassment

• bring the council into disrepute, including through content posted in a personal capacity

• post offensive language relating to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age, religion or belief

• conduct any online activity that violates laws, regulations or that constitutes a criminal

offence

In addition, the following actions are also prohibited

• Publishing untrue statements about a person which is damaging to their reputation is libel

and can result in a court action and fine for damages.

• Publishing personal data of individuals without permission is a breach of Data Protection

legislation and is an offence.

• Publication of obscene material is a criminal offence and is subject to a custodial sentence.

**Moderators**

The Lostock Gralam Parish Council will appoint two moderators of the parish council social media output. They will be responsible for posting and monitoring content to ensure it complies with this Social Media Policy.

The moderators will have authority to remove any posts made by third parties from Parish Council social media pages which are deemed to be of a defamatory or libellous nature.

Last review January 2020

This policy will be reviewed annually thereafter.