

Colburn Hipswell & Scotton Joint Burial Authority

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The use of digital and social media now has a clear and compelling impact on all areas of local government, enabling better and more direct contact between the Burial Board and the people and organizations that it serves and works with.

This Social Media Policy aims to describe how the Burial Board will use social media to improve and expand the ways in which it communicates with its local residents, local businesses and the various government (local and central) agencies that it deals with.

It sets out what is and what is not acceptable usage of social media and compliments the general rules in the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

Social media describes a range of websites and online tools which allow people to interact. This includes blogs and postings on a wide range of platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Linked-in, Instagram and many others.

Social media is all about sharing information and people use social media platforms to give opinions, create interest groups and to build online communities and network which encourage participation and engagement.

This policy relates to any social media communication published by or on behalf of the Burial Board or any individual in their capacity as a member.

Any communication is capable of being misinterpreted. The immediacy of social media and the lack of face to face contact can magnify any problem.

Information and comments made can be broadcast to a large number of people more quickly than other media.

The same rules apply to social media that govern other behaviour as a Burial Board member, but extra care needs to be taken given the immediacy and ease of dissemination.

Although social media is conversational in tone, it is recorded, and it is permanent, so content and comment must be accurate, informative and thought through.

The Clerk is responsible for all formal communication between the Burial Board and members of the public and will be responsible for maintaining the Burial Board website.

However, it is understood that there will be times when individual members may be communicating on social media.

Social media communications from members of the Burial Board will meet the following criteria:

Be civil, tasteful and relevant.

Not contain content that is unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually orientated or racially offensive.

Not contain content copied from elsewhere, for which we do not own the copyright.

Not contain personal information, other than required basic contact details.

Burial Board members should always spell out clearly whether they are communicating on social media as a member or as a private individual.

Burial Board members should ensure that they comply with the Code of Conduct for Councillors whenever they act or appear in an official capacity on social media in the same way as with any other form of communication.

Whilst independent communications with parishioners are important in order to engage and be approachable, the overarching rules are that members should not make commitments on behalf of the Burial Board, not bring the Burial Board into disrepute and always respect confidentiality.

If an untrue statement about a person which is damaging to their reputation is published, they may consider it as defamatory and consider legal action.

Using images or text on social media from a copyrighted source (for example extracts from publications or photographs), without obtaining permission, is likely to breach copyright laws.

Personal data of individuals must not be published unless you have their express permission. Personal information in an email or personal exchange should not be presumed to imply any consent to pass it on to others.

Burial Board members should not say anything on social media (or indeed anywhere) that suggests they have made up their mind on an issue that is due to be formally decided. While your likely view on a particular application may be well known, you need to be able to show that you attended the committee or hearing prepared to take on board and weigh all the evidence, and were genuinely persuadable to a different view, or the decision may be later challenged as invalid.