



# **SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY**

Adopted Date	May 2023
Review Period	2 years
Last Review Date	January 2026
Next Review Date	June 2027

## Digital, Social Media, and Electronic Communications Policy

### **1. Introduction**

The use of digital, social media, and electronic communication enables Faversham Town Council to interact effectively with residents, businesses, agencies, and other stakeholders. Our channels include our website, Facebook, NextDoor, Instagram, LinkedIn and email. The Council will continue to use the most appropriate channel for communication and may expand to new platforms over time. Updates to this policy will reflect any changes in communication channels.

Our social media accounts are primarily intended to provide information, updates, and opportunities within the town, while promoting the community positively.

#### **Guiding Principles for Council Communications:**

- Communications must be civil, professional, and relevant.
- Content must not be unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually explicit, or racially offensive.
- Content must not infringe copyright.
- Personal information must not be disclosed.
- Official Council business will be moderated by the Town Clerk.
- Social media will not be used for political advertising.

#### **Guidelines for Public Interaction on Council Social Media:**

- Be considerate and respectful. Vulgarity, threats, or abusive language will not be tolerated.
- Diverse opinions are welcome, but personal attacks on Councillors, staff, or other users are prohibited.
- Share official Council content responsibly, respecting copyright and providing credit where due.
- Keep discussions relevant to the topic.
- Do not use Council social media for commercial promotion or advertising.

#### **Monitoring and Response:**

- Social media channels are not monitored 24/7. Individual responses are not possible.

- Messages/posts should not include personal/private information.
- Social media posts are not considered official communication with the Council. Official queries should be directed to the Town Clerk via email.
- The Council reserves the right to remove posts/comments that:
  - Contain obscene, racist, or offensive content
  - Include personal attacks, insults, or threats
  - Are potentially libellous
  - Infringe copyright or other laws
  - Publish private information without consent
  - Are unrelated to the discussion topic
  - Constitute spam or commercial promotion
  - Allege breaches of Council policy or the law

The Council may post a statement noting the removal of content breaching this policy. Repeat offenders may be blocked. Where allegations relate to breaches of policy or law, users will be asked to submit a formal complaint or report to the appropriate authorities.

## **2. Faversham Town Council Website**

- The Council may direct users to the website for information or forward enquiries to Councillors.
- Responses may not be provided for all comments, particularly during periods of high workload.
- The website is designed to be accessible, compliant with WCAG 2.1 AA standards, and supports the What3Words (w3w) system for precise location references.

## **3. VisitFaversham.org Website**

- VisitFaversham.org is the official tourism and visitor information portal for Faversham, managed by the Town Council.
- The website provides information about events, attractions, local businesses, and cultural activities in the town.

- While the Council oversees the site's content strategy, individual event organisers or businesses are responsible for the accuracy of their own listings.
- All content must comply with the Council's standards regarding copyright, accuracy, and appropriateness.
- Content that originates from third parties should clearly indicate that it is not directly the responsibility of the Council.

#### **4. Town Council Email**

- All staff have individual Council email accounts, monitored during office hours, Monday–Friday.
- Councillors may communicate directly with residents on personal views using their town council email address. All emails are subject to the Freedom of Information Act.
- Personal information (names, addresses, emails, IP addresses, cookie identifiers) must not be forwarded externally.

#### **5. Video Conferencing (Zoom, Teams, etc.)**

- All policy provisions also apply to video conferencing platforms.

#### **6. Internal Communication and Access to Information**

- The Council continually seeks to improve internal communication, with digital and social media playing a key role.
- Councillors must comply with the Code of Conduct, GDPR, and all confidentiality requirements.
- Confidential information must not be shared outside authorised channels. Breaches may constitute a Code of Conduct violation or legal/criminal issues.
- Email recipients should be limited to essential contacts, avoiding 'Reply to All' where possible, and ensuring email threads are managed appropriately.