

HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

MEDIA SUB COMMITTEE

To: All members of the Media Sub Committee

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONSED TO ATTEND
a meeting of the
MEDIA SUB COMMITTEE

A meeting of this Sub Committee will be held
At the TOWN HALL, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3PJ
on Tuesday 14th November 2023
at 6.30pm

A G E N D A

35. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence

36. MINUTES

To receive and approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 12th October 2023 (M4) (Attached).

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To hear any declarations of interest in items on this agenda

38. PUBLIC ADDRESS

To hear any address to the Sub Committee on matters which are the responsibility of this Sub-Committee from members of the public and other members of the Town Council

39. COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA UPDATE

To receive a written report from the Communications Officer on Communications and media (attached)

40. WEBSITE DEMONSTRATION

To receive a short demonstration of the new Huntingdon Town Council Website

41. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

To receive and approve updated Social Media policy and Councillor Social Media Code of Conduct (attached)

42. HUNTINGDON ISSUE 33

To receive and approve the draft of Huntingdon Magazine issue 33

34. **DATE & TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 4th January 2024 at Huntingdon Town Hall, Market Hill, Huntingdon, PE29 3PJ.

Date: 5th October 2023
Huntingdon Town Hall,
Huntingdon,
PE29 3PJ

Philip Peacock

Philip Peacock
Town Clerk

This meeting will be serviced by the Communications Officer, telephone 01480 410387

Copies for information to:
The members of Huntingdon Town Council.

Notes

A. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

(1) Members are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and unless you have obtained dispensation, cannot discuss or vote on the matter at the meeting and must also leave the room whilst the matter is being debated or voted on.

(2) A Member has a disclosable pecuniary interest if it

(a) relates to you, or

(b) is an interest of -

(i) your spouse or civil partner; or (ii) a person with whom you are living as husband and wife; or (iii) a person with whom you are living as if you were civil partners and you are aware that the other person has the interest.

(3) Disclosable pecuniary interests includes -

(a) any employment or profession carried out for profit or gain;

(b) any financial benefit received by the Member in respect of expenses incurred carrying out his or her duties as a Member (except from the Council);

(c) any current contracts with the Council;

(d) any beneficial interest in land/property within the Council's area;

(e) any licence for a month or longer to occupy land in the Council's area;

(f) any tenancy where the Council is landlord and the Member (or person in (2)(b) above) has a beneficial interest; or

(g) a beneficial interest (above the specified level) in the shares of any body which has a place of business or land in the Council's area.

B. Other Interests

(4) If a Member has a non-disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest then you are required to declare that interest, but may remain to discuss and vote.

(5) A Member has a non-disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest where -

(a) a decision in relation to the business being considered might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing of you or a member of your family or a person with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the council tax payers, rate payers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the Council's administrative area, or

(b) it relates to or is likely to affect any of the descriptions referred to above, but in respect of a member of your family (other than specified in (2)(b) above) or a person with whom you have a close association and that interest is not a disclosable pecuniary interest.

HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL**MEDIA SUB COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Media Sub Committee was held at Huntingdon Town Hall, Market Hill, Huntingdon on Thursday 12th October 2023 at 6.30pm.

Present: Councillors: K Brockett (Ex-Officio); M Fearon; G Hunt; P Kennington; A Norton; A McAdam; S McAdam; A Norton; and K Webb.

Apologies: P Pearce (Ex-Officio)

27. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor P Pearce (Ex-Officio)

28. **MINUTES**

Copies of the minutes of the Media Sub Committee meeting held on 24th August 2023 had been circulated, following their informal approval by the Chairman. It was

RESOLVED that these minutes were a correct record, and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

29. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

30. **PUBLIC ADDRESS**

A Member wished to speak. It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting.

A Member confirmed there were still missed deliveries of the Huntingdon magazine on Temple Place and Duncan Way. The Communications Officer confirmed that there had been more missed deliveries for this issue, and this has already been raised with the distributors (Archant). Redelivery had been arranged, but no further information had been received regarding the reasons for the frequency of missed deliveries.

ACTION 30.1: Communications Officer to continue discussions with Archant regarding missed deliveries.

A Member asked what the costs for production and distribution of Huntingdon Magazine, and could any savings be made by reducing number of pages.

ACTION 30.2: Communications Officer to provide full cost breakdown of magazine and research alternative production and distributor costs.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to reconvene the meeting.

31. **COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA UPDATE**

The Chairman invited the Communications Officer to give a summary of the communications and media report.

The Communications Officer highlighted that social media performance has improved across most channels in July, with good increases in followers, although some decreases in reach due to lack of events.

The Communications Officer stated that capacity may be stretched for a few months while supporting the Coneygear social media pages as they have recently lost the member of staff responsible for this.

The Christmas market pages have been rebranded and an Instagram account has been launched under this branding. Other social media channels such as a Town Council Instagram, TikTok or Threads account are still being investigated.

There was less advertising expected in the magazine for the next few issues. Opportunities to advertise had been shared on social media and would continue to do so.

The Communications Officer confirmed that work on the new website was continuing with content being written this week. The previous suppliers had been informed that their contract would not be extended.

The chairman asked if there were any questions.

A Member asked if the crematorium website would continue or be replaced by the new website. The Communications Officer confirmed that it would continue to run separately as it links in with their specialist software. However, there would be a page on the main HTC website with information which links through to the crematorium site.

The Communications Officer confirmed that as part of the main HTC website redesign, updated social media and privacy policies and accessibility statements would need to be approved by full Town Council in November, and these would cover all council services including the main HTC website, the Crematorium website and the Christmas Market and Town Hall event hire websites.

A Member raised that some content on the current website was out of date. The Communications Officer asked to be informed of the pages affected so that they could be updated, but that the primary focus was to get the new website up and running.

Members noted the report.

32. **ENVIRONMENT**

The Chairman invited the Chair of the Environment Sub Committee, Cllr Hunt, to address the committee.

Cllr Hunt stated that at a previous meeting of the Environment Sub Committee, they discussed having a regular feature in the magazine about the work of the subcommittee, and focusing on actions that residents can do themselves.

The chairman asked for any comments. Members stated that this would be a good idea.

ACTION 32.1: Communications Officer to contact Chair of Environment Sub Committee for more information about future ideas.

33. **HUNTINGDON ISSUE 33**

The Chairman invited the Communications Officer to run through the suggested contents for each page of Huntingdon magazine, Issue 33.

Front Cover – It was suggested a picture of the Crematorium woodland covered in snow and taken last year might be suitable for the front cover. Other suggestions were welcomed.

Page 2 – This page could include a paid advert from Safe Local Trades, and community news.

Page 3 – This page could include the contents, a Christmas message from the Town Clerk and the Committee and Publisher details.

Page 4 – This page could feature an article on the News from the Town Council and an update on Staffing Changes.

Page 5 – This page could feature news from the Estate Services team, and the crematorium.

Page 6 – This page could feature the Coneygear centre and Coneygear garden.

Page 7 – This page could feature a full-page article on Huntingdon in Bloom, including the various awards ceremonies that have taken place recently.

Page 8 – This page could include information about the next round of Town Council grants and The Cromwell Museum.

Page 9 – This page could include a feature on Huntingdon Gymnastics Club, as council owned property, and a regular feature on the History of Huntingdon, focusing on artwork within Huntingdon Town Hall.

Page 10 – This page could feature a full-page article and photos from the remembrance services that had taken place.

Page 11 – This page could feature a full-page article and photos from the Twinning events and BAM Mural.

Page 12 – This page could feature community news.

Page 13 – This page could feature community news.

Page 14 – This page could feature community news.

Page 15 – This page could feature community news and potentially any information about local Christmas markets/ community or school fayres.

Page 16 – This page could include the Christmas messages from the Mayor and the Mayor’s Chaplin.

Page 17 – This page could include details of any Christmas church services in the area. It was confirmed that this would be offered for free, but if churches wish to supply any artwork etc, this would be treated as an advert, and therefore would require payment.

Page 18 – This page would include the usual Forthcoming Council Meetings and Forthcoming Events.

Page 19 – This page would include the standard information on Who’s Who at the Council.

Page 20 – This page would include the advert for the pancake Flipathon.

The Communications Officer suggested content which had been received, from Devika Care Company, Nexus Fostering and Age UK Community Wardens. It was suggested that as all request payment for their services, they should be offered advertising space with the magazine.

The chairman asked for any comments.

A member asked about the Twinning article, and whether any of the youth involved would be asked to contribute. The communications officer stated she would speak with the Huntingdon and Godmanchester Twinning Association who would be providing the article, and request that the youth voice was included.

A member suggested that the current Eco Audit be included as an environment item, with suggestions for how residents can make changes at home.

34. **DATE & AGENDA OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted as TBC due to changes within the meetings calendar.

ITEM NO.	ACTION	WHO’S RESPONSIBLE	UPDATE
ACTION 30.1:	Communications Officer to continue discussions with Archant regarding missed deliveries.	Communications Officer	
ACTION	Communications Officer to	Communications	

30.2:	provide full cost breakdown of magazine and research alternative production and distributor costs.	Officer	
ACTION 32.1:	Communications Officer to contact Chair of Environment Sub Committee for more information about future ideas.	Communications Officer	Completed.

CHAIRMAN

TO: Media Sub Committee

Date: 09/11/2023

Communications and Media November 2023 Update

(Report by Sarah Jane Gaule, Communications Officer)

1 Social media

1.1 Huntingdon Town Council currently manage 14 different social media accounts, although 4 are currently inactive.

Facebook Channels	Followers	Monthly Change	Reach	Monthly Change
Huntingdon Town Council	1906	→ 0.74%	3,192	↓ -77.88%
Coneygear Centre	1376	↑ 2.38%	7177	↓ -48.11%
Coneygear Garden	105	↑ 1.94%	202	↑ 220.63%
Huntingdon Christmas Market	1809	↑ 3.67%	17305	↑ 255.41%
Huntingdon in Bloom	215	↑ 3.86%	3461	↑ 284.13%
Mayor of Huntingdon	161	↑ 15.00%	3014	↓ -29.63%

Table 1: Facebook performance in October 2023

1.2 The Huntingdon Town Council Facebook has had a small increase in followers; however, reach has decreased. This is likely due to reduced content in October. It is anticipated this will improve as we head into November and December events.

1.3 The Coneygear Centre page has a small increase in followers, but a decrease in reach. This is due to a higher than usual reach in August and September, with October returning to more expected levels. This page is managed by the Coneygear staff, supported by the Communications officer.

1.4 The Coneygear Community Garden was launched in May 2023 and continues to grow in reach and followers. New content is being planned to boost reach and promote the work of the garden. This page is managed by the Coneygear staff, supported by the Communications officer.

1.5 The Huntingdon Christmas Market page has been rebranded with the new design for 2023, and content is now scheduled for the next few months. The page has seen a small increase in followers but significant increase in organic reach. From November, there will also be paid advertising for this account which will boost the reach further.

1.6 The Huntingdon in Bloom Facebook page has continued growing in likes and followers and has seen an increase in reach. Content is being planned to continue increasing engagement during the winter months.

- 1.7 The new Mayor of Huntingdon has had a good increase in followers although a small decrease in reach. Promotion of this page will be included in the next issue of the magazine. This page is monitored by Huntingdon Town Council but is managed by the current Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
- 1.8 The Huntingdon Town Hall Weddings Facebook and Instagram pages are currently inactive. The Corporate officer is in the process of refreshing the content to reflect the wider hire potential and is also updating the attached website. This will be relaunched in the new year.
- 1.9 The Huntingdon Neighbourhood Plan and Huntingdon Youth Town Council are also currently inactive. Work has been undertaken recently with Huntingdon Youth Town Council, but this hasn't reached a point yet where the page can be reactivated.

Other Channels	Followers	Monthly Change	Reach / Impressions	Monthly Change
X (Formerly known as Twitter)	1656	➔ 0.06%	794	⬇ -46.64%
Linkedin	45	⬆ 7.14%	78	⬇ -55.68%
Instagram (Huntingdon in Bloom)	111	➔ 0.00%	96	⬆ 84.62%
Instagram (HTC Weddings)	295	➔ 0.68%	1	➔ 0.00%
Instagram (Huntingdon Christmas)	77	➔ 0.00%	114	➔ 0.00%

Table 2: Other Social Media performance in September 2023

- 1.10 The Huntingdon Town Council Twitter (now known as X) had limited content in October, due to staff capacity. It is expected to increase again in November, due to planned content for Remembrance and HM the King's birthday, which perform well on this platform.
- 1.11 The Huntingdon Town Council LinkedIn has seen an increase in followers. Work is ongoing to update the 'Employees' and 'Volunteers' of the page to ensure they reflect the current staff and Councillors. More specific strategic content is being developed to increase activity on this page.
- 1.12 The Huntingdon in Bloom Instagram page has had a small increase in reach. Content is being planned to take advantage of this.
- 1.13 As several of our traders are not present on Facebook, but are present on Instagram, a new Instagram account for the Huntingdon Christmas Market has been launched to cross post and allow us to promote these traders. Content will be slightly different to the main Facebook page, and focus more on photos of past events, but also highlight those traders who are on Instagram. Paid advertising is also being used to promote this account and the market itself.
- 1.14 There are complications setting up the NextDoor account. NextDoor do not currently allow Town/Parish Councils to set up as a Public Service

account, as this is reserved for those at a Borough, District and County Council level. The Communications Officer will continue to investigate this issue further.

- 1.15 The Communications officer will continue to investigate other social media channels such as a Town Council Instagram or TikTok account, and also a possible Threads account. The Local Government Association has recently launched on Threads, but there has not been enough evidence of audience engagement yet.

2 Press and Print Media

- 2.1 There were 3 press releases issued in October. These relate to the enhanced Armistice service, the Remembrance Sunday service, and the Huntingdon Christmas market. The Armistice and Remembrance Sunday services are mentioned on the Hunts Post round up of all activities.
- 2.2 The Armistice Day service was promoted by Huntingdon and Peterborough Federation of WIs on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire.
- 2.3 There are some paid advertisements of the Huntingdon Christmas Market within local magazines, including Velvet magazine, What the Buzz Magazine and WI news. It will also be advertised in the Hunts Post.

3 Huntingdon Magazine and Town Guide

- 3.1 Issue 32 went to print slightly late due to issues with the printers after the bank holiday. Delivery was also then delayed and did not go out until w/c 11th September.
- 3.2 Following new reports of missing deliveries, the communications officer is keeping a record of missed deliveries so that patterns can be established. This is being chased with the distributors.
- 3.3 Issue 33 will contain 3 paid for adverts. We have 1 business who have paid for future issues.

Issue 33 (Winter)	Safe local trades Christ Church Huntingdon TR Cleaning
Issue 34 (Spring)	TR Cleaning

We have had interest from several other businesses, but no formal commitments. When distributing the magazine with local estate agents, the current advertising rate card was also shared.

- 3.4 The Current advertising rate card was last reviewed in 2021. The Communications officer is in the process of benchmarking the HTC advertising rates against other local council publications and will produce a report shortly.

4 Public Consultations

- 4.1 There are currently no live public consultations.
- 4.2 Reports on the public consultations for Sallowbush Road dog walking area, Bevan Close Play area, and Maryland Avenue play area have gone to the Leisure and Community Services Committee. We are now waiting on updates from Huntingdonshire District Council. Once there is more progress, infographics will be shared, highlighting the key findings of the consultations, along with the outcome.
- 4.3 Public consultation has concluded for Stukeley Meadows Trim Trail and a report went to the Leisure and Community Services Committee in August. Following this consultation, the matter has now been referred back to the Leisure Development Sub Committee for further discussion. An infographic will be prepared to share the outcome of this consultation as any further development will likely be consulted on separately.
- 4.4 Public consultation has concluded on the proposed 20 mph zones, as part of the application to Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC). A report was presented to the Town Council in July, and the proposed zones were endorsed. CCC have a new proposal which will be discussed at a Extraordinary meeting of the Town Council on 16th November. A new consultation may be required following this.

5 Website

- 5.1 Following the completion of the website tender process, work has begun with new suppliers Aubergine. Some core content (such as previous minutes and agendas) is being transferred across from the existing website and new content is being drafted.
- 5.2 Staff undertook an initial training session on Thursday 2nd November with additional training to continue as necessary. Some of this will focus on improved statistics and reporting.
- 5.3 The current website, provided by 2Commune, is still being monitored and essential content updated as required. The current contract with 2Commune expires in March 2024, and they require 3 months written notice, which has now been given.
- 5.4 We currently have 19% higher unique visitors YOY than in 2022, 25% higher number of visits YOY, and average dwell time is up 11% to 171 secs. We have seen an increase in traffic in October, following a quieter September.

Contact Officer: Sarah Jane Gaule, Communications Officer

☎ 01480 410 387

Huntingdon Town Council

Social Media Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1. Huntingdon Town Council intends to increase and improve the ways in which it engages, to build a stronger relationship between the Council and the local community. As part of the 2022-2026 Corporate Plan, Huntingdon Town Council has a stated objective to improved communications.
- 1.2. Huntingdon Town Council is committed to making the best use of all available technology and innovation to improve the way we interact with our community. This includes using all reasonable and cost-effective means to improve the way we communicate, reach out and interact with the individuals we serve and groups with whom we work in partnership.
- 1.3. 'Social media' is the term commonly given to web-based tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge, and interests online. As the name implies, social media involves the building of online communities or networks to encourage participation and engagement.
- 1.4. To avoid major mistakes which could result in reputational, legal and ethical issues, and misuse/abuse of a well functioning social media relationship, it is important that we manage potential risks through a common-sense approach and framework as well as proactively monitoring the development of such applications.

2 Aim

- 2.1. These guidelines aim to provide Councillors and employees with information concerning the use of, or the development of, any social media application, and to help them get the best out of the tools available whilst maintaining a safe professional environment and protecting themselves, as well as the Council.

3 Definition

- 3.1. For the purposes of these guidelines, social media is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes e-mail, online social forums, blogs, video- and image-sharing websites and similar facilities.
- 3.2. There are many more examples of social media than can be listed here and this is a constantly changing arena. It is not appropriate for Huntingdon Town Council to maintain an active presence on all social media platforms. The Communications Officer will continually review new and existing platforms for

their appropriateness. A list of social media platforms used by Huntingdon Town Council is available under Appendix 1.

4 Business Use of social media by Council Employees

- 4.1. The Council's use of social media will be managed by the Communications Manager, in consultation with the Town Clerk.
- 4.2. The Communications Manager will delegate some day-to-day functions of Council managed social media to other officers as appropriate. A list of social media platforms used by Huntingdon Town Council and who manages each platform is available under Appendix 1. For the purposes of simplicity, in this document the Communications Officer, the Town Clerk (or other officer deputising in his absence) and the officers listed in Appendix 1 will be referred to as 'Authorised Officers'.
- 4.3. No other Council employees will be permitted to set up accounts, groups, pages or profiles on behalf of their service area, or the Council. Other Council employees can only engage in social media activity on behalf of Huntingdon Town Council with the express permission of an Authorised Officer, and they must also adhere to the contents of this policy.
- 4.4. Where possible, Authorised Officers will refrain from using shared accounts or log in details to post on social media. This allows for greater accountability.
- 4.5. When using Council social media, Authorised Officers should always be professional and remember that they are an ambassador for the Council. Any communications that Authorised Officers make through Council social media must not:
 - Bring the organisation into disrepute, for example by:
 - criticising or arguing with customers, colleagues, Councillors, the Council or other partner organisations.
 - making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.
 - posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content.
 - Breach confidentiality, for example by:
 - giving away confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague or customer contact) or an organisation.
 - discussing the organisation's internal workings or its future business plans that have not been communicated to the public.
 - Breach copyright, for example by:
 - using someone else's images or written content without permission.

- failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something.
- Be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, being married or in a civil partnership, religion or belief or age.
- Be used for political purposes or specific political campaigning purposes.
- Seek to promote Councillors' social media accounts during the pre-election period. The Council will continue to publish important service announcements using social media but reserves the right to remove responses if they are overtly party political.
- Compromise their own safety when placing information on the internet and must not publish information which could leave them vulnerable.

4.6. The following guidelines must be followed when managing content and responding to service users on social media:

- Authorised Officers should plan and schedule social media posts 1-2 weeks in advance, so that content can be reviewed. Content should promote council activities relevant to that area of work.
- 3rd party content may be shared from a council account, where applicable and relevant to council activities or public interest. It is advised to share information from the 3rd party account, rather than post directly, so that it is clear who is responsible for the information.
 - Sharing of 3rd party content does not imply endorsement.
- Accessibility guidelines should be always adhered to, to allow all service users to access content This includes:
 - Use of Alt text for all images
 - Adding captions or subtitles to videos
 - Use of plain English
- Authorised Officers must not respond to negative comments if a service user has commented an opinion (unless it is discriminatory, offensive or aimed to bring the Council into disrepute). An Authorised Officer may provide the correct information if it is deemed appropriate by a manager.
- If a comment or post contravenes with our communication guidelines (item 4.4), screenshots should be taken of the comments before they are removed, and if necessary, the Communications Officer will release a statement to address any public concerns.
 - For example: a comment has been posted on the Huntingdon Town Council Facebook page, the comment chain has a large engagement, and the comments are becoming increasingly more offensive.

- If a member of the public has shared negative feedback, an Authorised Officer should provide the opportunity to gather this feedback in a constructive manner by providing contact details. However, if the person(s) persist in commenting negative and offensive content, an employee should block the person and report the offensive content on the relevant platform.
 - Authorised Officers should ensure that the correct privacy settings and post moderation is in place on all the relevant social media platforms to reduce the risk of offensive content from being circulated.
 - This includes removing social media pages or information once it is out of date or no longer required.
- 4.7. Employees should be aware that misconduct arising from the misuse of social media will be treated in the same way as any other form of misconduct and in line with the Council's disciplinary rules and procedure.
- 4.8. If an Authorised Officer receives any threats, abuse or harassment from members of the public through their use of social media as part of their work they must report such incidents immediately to their line manager. Employees should also refer to the Council's Staff Handbook.
- 4.9. Authorised Officers should undertake training in the responsible use of social media.
- 4.10. This policy and guidelines are in addition to any professional standards that govern employees' area of work and all other Council policies which employees are expected to comply with.

5 Personal use of social media by Council Employees

- 5.1. This Policy applies to all Huntingdon Town Council employees (including temporary staff who work for the Town Council for any period of time) who use personal social media in their own time or who plan to use it in the future.
- 5.2. All employees are required to adhere to this policy and it should be noted that any breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action.
- 5.3. Huntingdon Town Council recognises that many employees make use of social media in a personal capacity outside of work and that they are responsible for their own activities and statements.
- 5.4. Although they are not acting on behalf of the Council, employees must be aware that their actions on their personal social media accounts could potentially damage the reputation of the Council, especially if they have specified their role and/or employer as part of their social media accounts.

- 5.5. This means that, when using social media in their personal life, an employee must:
- not engage in activities on the internet that might bring the Council, its employees, or Councillors into disrepute.
 - use caution if posting any comment regarding public policy or political party matters.
 - consider whether a comment would make it difficult to fulfil their normal work duties (e.g. in respect of a political matter);
 - be aware that matters become particularly sensitive during a pre-election period.
- 5.6. The Council reserves the right to monitor employees' internet usage. Valid reasons for checking an employee's internet usage include suspicions that the employee has:
- been spending an excessive amount of time using social media websites for non-work-related activity; or
 - acted in a way that is in breach of the rules set out in these guidelines.

Access to particular social media websites may be withdrawn in any case of misuse.

6 Use of social media by Councillors

- 6.1. The Council recognises that Councillors may make use of social media in both a personal capacity and an official capacity. Councillors must adhere to the Huntingdon Town Council Code of Conduct policy and apply the same standards online as are required offline, whether acting in an official or personal capacity.
- 6.2. Councillors must also adhere to the Huntingdon Town Council Social Media Code of Conduct for Councillors. This Code of Conduct has been designed to offer support and guidance to Huntingdon Town Councillors when using social media in their role. This is supplementary to the Huntingdon Town Council Social Media policy and the Huntingdon Town Council Code of Conduct policy.
- 6.3. Councillors are encouraged to establish official accounts on social media platforms, rather than use their personal social media. Where councillors continue to use their personal accounts, if you are referring online in any way to your role as a councillor, you are deemed to be acting in your 'official capacity' and any conduct may fall within the code.
- 6.4. If Councillors do discuss their work on social media (for example, giving opinions on the activities of their role, they should include on their profile a statement along the lines of: "The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of Huntingdon Town Council."

- 6.5. Councillors should be aware that this disclaimer does not absolve them from responsibility relating to the Code of Conduct, or other Council policies.
- 6.6. The Council recognises that Councillors may wish to use their social media platforms for political purposes, or specific political campaigning purposes. Councillors must ensure that it is clear you are speaking within a personal capacity and do not reflect the views of Huntingdon Town Council.
- 6.7. Any communications that Councillors make in either a personal or official capacity through social media must not:
- Bring the organisation into disrepute, for example by:
 - arguing with individuals, colleagues, Councillors, the Council or other partner organisations.
 - making defamatory comments about individuals, colleagues, Councillors, the Council or other partner organisations.
 - posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content.
 - Breach confidentiality, for example by:
 - giving away confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague or customer contact) or an organisation.
 - discussing the organisation's internal workings or its future business plans that have not been communicated to the public.
 - Breach copyright, for example by:
 - using someone else's images or written content without permission.
 - failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something.
 - Be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, being married or in a civil partnership, religion or belief or age.

7 Disciplinary action over social media use

- 7.1. All participants are required to adhere to these guidelines.
- 7.2. Staff should be aware that use of social media in a way that may be deemed as deliberate or inadvertent misuse which could be a breach of these guidelines, may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the Council's policy.
- 7.3. Misuse of social media by Councillors may be considered a breach of the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council.

8 Review

- 8.1. The fast-changing nature of information technology, particularly in relation to electronic communication incorporating aspects such as social media, means that these guidelines should be reviewed on an annual basis.

DRAFT

Appendix 1: List of Town Council managed social media accounts

Facebook

- Huntingdon Town Council (@HuntingdonTownHall)
 - Authorised Officers:
- Coneygear Centre
 - Authorised Officers:
- Coneygear Community Garden
 - Authorised Officers:
- Huntingdon In Bloom
 - Authorised Officers:
- Huntingdon Christmas Market
 - Authorised Officers:
- Huntingdon Town Hall Weddings
 - Authorised Officers:

Instagram

- Huntingdon In Bloom
 - Authorised Officers:
- Huntingdon Town Hall Weddings
 - Authorised Officers:

X (Formerly known as Twitter)

- Huntingdon Town Council (@HuntingdonTownHall)
 - Authorised Officers:

LinkedIn

- Huntingdon Town Council (@HuntingdonTownHall)
 - Authorised Officers:



Huntingdon Town Council Social Media Code of Conduct For Councillors

This Code of Conduct has been designed to offer support and guidance to Huntingdon Town Councillors when using social media in their role. This is supplementary to the Huntingdon Town Council Social Media policy and the Huntingdon Town Council Code of Conduct policy.

Social media is constantly evolving and different platforms may require different approaches. This code of conduct applies across all platforms.

Councillors are advised to review the guidance available on the LGA website (<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/communications-and-community-engagement/social-media-guidance-councillors>)

General

1. Councillors must adhere to the Huntingdon Town Council Code of Conduct policy and apply the same standards online as are required offline, whether acting in an official or personal capacity.
2. Councillors are encouraged to establish official accounts on social media platforms, rather than use their personal social media.
3. Where councillors continue to use their personal accounts, if you are referring online in any way to your role as a councillor, you are deemed to be acting in your 'official capacity' and any conduct may fall within the code.
4. Where councillors choose to keep their social media activity private, they are advised that there is still a risk that posts or activity on your personal profile will be seen and shared publicly – no matter how strict your privacy settings are. Saying it is private is no defence.
5. Councillors are encouraged to follow the Huntingdon Town Council social media pages listed in Appendix 1 of the Huntingdon Town Council Social media Policy.

Security

6. Councillors are advised to enable two factor authentication on all social media accounts, both official and personal.
7. In the event that a councillor believes their social media account has been accessed inappropriately, they must report it to the Communications Officer and the Town Clerk, so that appropriate action can be taken.
8. Councillors should not compromise their own safety when placing information on the internet and must not publish information which could leave them vulnerable.
9. Councillors are advised to consider signing up to the Digital Citizenship pledge (<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/guidance-and-resources/civility-public-life-resources-councillors/handling-abuse-and-0>)



Content

10. Common sense: Social media helps us work openly and connect with the citizens we serve – just remember to apply common sense. If in doubt, don't post it.
11. Permanent: Remember that once something is posted online, it's very difficult to remove it.
12. Accuracy: Check the accuracy and sensitivity of what you are posting before pressing submit

Community Engagement

13. Councillors who are active on social media have a great opportunity to monitor – or 'take the temperature' of – public opinion.
14. There will always be a place for opinion polls and surveys which can help measure views formally including officially measuring performance. But by being part of community Facebook groups and keeping an eye on what's being talked about, or monitoring what people are sharing on Twitter by following local hashtags, councillors can quickly take note of what local residents think – and act on it if they need to.
15. This might be monitoring how the public responds to council decisions or community issues. Monitoring what's happening on social media can be likened to being able to have hundreds and hundreds of doorstep conversations each week.

Party Politics

16. Where councillors are members of a political party, they are reminded that they are a representative of everyone in their ward, not only those who support your political party.
17. Party politics can also be one of the main triggers for abuse and aggression on social media which can be particularly corrosive if it is between councillors of different political parties on the same council. Residents do not like to see their councillors being rude or hostile to one another on social media. It is vital that any political disagreements are handled politely and with respect to opponents.
18. Being a member of a political party can also often draw councillors into issues well outside the remit or control of their local council. This is particularly true if their party is in Government – when councillors may find themselves criticised by residents or other councillors for decisions made in Westminster. It is up to the individual to decide whether to engage with these issues. Getting involved with one national issue will mean that residents expect your thoughts on others too.

Civic and ceremonial roles

19. Social media offers councillors who hold civic or ceremonial roles for a council a real opportunity to reach out and engage with the public beyond meeting them in person or coverage in traditional media, such as local newspapers.
20. Mayors are often the public face of councils. Greater social media activity by them can really help to raise both the profile of the council and awareness of what the mayor (or equivalent) is doing. This can increase public participation and understanding of council's work, increasing the impact of the social media content.