**BRINDLE PARISH COUNCIL**

**Social Media Policy**

Adopted: 02 September 2024

**1. Policy statement**

1.1. This policy is intended to help Councillors and employees make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as blogs, wikis, social networking websites, podcasts, forums, message boards, or comments on web-articles, such as x formerly known as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and any other relevant social media platforms.

1.2. This policy outlines the standards Councillors and employees are expected to observe when using social media.

1.3. This policy supplements the LGA Code of Conduct Policy and the Chorley BC Social Media Protocol.

1.4. This policy does not form part of any contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

**2. Who is covered by the policy**

2.1. This policy covers all Councillors and employees of Brindle Parish Council.

**3. The scope of the policy**

3.1. All Councillors and employees are asked to comply with this policy to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of Brindle Parish Council, Chorley Borough Council and Lancashire County Council and Parishioners of Brindle Parish Council and neighbouring parishes.

3.2. Breach of this policy could lead to a report being made to the Monitoring Officer.

**4. Responsibility for implementation of the policy**

4.1. The Chair has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.

4.2. The Chair and Clerk are responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for changes to minimise risks.

4.3. All Councillors and employees are responsible for their own compliance with this policy and for ensuring that it is consistently applied. All Councillors and employees should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any breach of this policy should be reported to the Chair or Clerk to Brindle Parish Council.

4.4. Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to the Clerk.

**5. Using social media sites in the name of Brindle Parish Council**

5.1. Only the Chair and/or Clerk of Brindle Parish Council are permitted to post material on a social media website in the name of Brindle Parish Council and on its behalf.

5.2 Councillors wanting to post on behalf of Brindle Parish Council must first receive approval in writing from the Chair or the Parish Clerk.

**6. Using Work Related Social Media**

6.1. Currently, Brindle Parish Council has a website but no other social media pages, sites or accounts specific to the Council.

6.2 The website will be updated by the Clerk as and when required and will include the Agenda and Minutes from all Parish meetings as well as details regarding the Parish, Parish Council accounts, and any other information the Clerk, Chair, Borough, County Council or LALC consider is essential.

6.3 Councillors may request additional uploads to the website by providing a specific request to the Clerk. If the Clerk does not consider this essential the request will be added to the next Agenda. Consideration will then be given to the request at the next Parish Council Meeting.

**7. Personal use of social media sites**

7.1. We accept that Councillors and employees will use social media websites for personal and/or business use and we respectfully request that Councillors and employees adhere to the following:

7.2 Use of social media should be in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

7.3 Councillors and employees should not upload, post, forward or post a link to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content.

7.4 Any Councillor, employee or Parishioner who feels that they have been harassed or bullied or is offended by material posted or uploaded by a Councillor or employee of Brindle Parish Council should inform the Clerk or Chair in the first instance at which point the Brindle Parish Council Complaints Policy will come into effect.

7.5 When making use of any social media platform, you must read and comply with its terms of use.

7.6 Councillors and employees should be honest and open but be mindful of the impact their contribution might make to people’s perceptions of them as a Councillor or employee and Brindle Parish Council.

7.7 Councillors and employees are personally responsible for content you publish into social media tools – they should be aware that what is published will be public for many years.

7.8 Councillors and employees should not escalate heated discussions and should try to be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations. Councillors and employees should never contribute to a discussion if they are angry or upset and should return to it later when they can contribute in a calm and rational manner.

7.9 If Councillors or employees feel uneasy about something they are about to publish, then they shouldn’t do it.

7.10 Councillors or employees should not discuss Councillors or employees without their prior approval.

7.11Councillors or employees should always consider others’ privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory e.g. politics and religion.

7.12 If Councillors or employees notice any content posted on social media about Brindle Parish Council (whether complementary or critical) they should report it to the Clerk.

**8. Monitoring use of social media websites**

8.1 Councillors and employees should be aware that if breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken following investigation to protect Brindle Parish Council, Chorley Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, Parishioners of Brindle Parish Council and neighbouring Parishes.

8.2 Misuse of social media websites can, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or otherwise give rise to legal liability against individuals.

8.3 Uploading, posting, forwarding or posting a link to any of the following types of material on a social media website, whether in a professional or personal capacity, may amount to gross misconduct (this list is not exhaustive):

(a) pornographic material (that is, writing, pictures, films and video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature);

(b) a false and defamatory statement about any person or organisation;

(c) material which is offensive, obscene, criminal discriminatory, derogatory or may cause embarrassment to Brindle Pariss Council, it’s Councillors or employees;

(d) confidential information about Brindle Parish Council, Chorley Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, Parishioners of Brindle Parish Council or neighbouring Parishes (which the Councillor or the employee does not have express authority to disseminate);

(e) any other statement which is likely to create any liability to you (whether criminal or civil) or

(f) material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights, or which invades the privacy of any person.

If necessary, such information may be handed to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.

**9. Monitoring and review of this policy**

9.1. The Clerk shall be responsible for reviewing this policy to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice. It will then be reviewed and approved at a full Parish Council Meeting.