RISBY PARISH COUNCIL
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Aim of the policy
The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to parish councillors and the clerk in the use of online public communications in the context of social media and the Parish Council's website. The principles of the policy apply to all councillors and the clerk to the council.

What is social media?
Social media is the term commonly given to website and online tools that allow users to interact with each other in some way, e.g. by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. Examples of popular social media tools include Facebook, X and WhatsApp.

Social media can provide a useful and often more far-reaching alternative to official means of communication such as written correspondence for the parish council to inform the local community.

Parish council use of online and social media
Online and social media should be used primarily for the following purposes:

- To support local individuals or community groups by sharing information that may be of benefit or interest.
- To advertise events and activities of potential interest to those who live in, work in, or visit the community.
- To alert the public to vacancies on the council.
- To announce new information that may be of relevance in relation to the work of the Parish Council.

The Parish Council will appoint a nominated councillor to be responsible for posting information on social media sites.

Posts by residents
Posting a comment on social media will not be considered as contacting the Parish Council for official purposes.

If a matter is raised via social media which the nominated councillor feels should be discussed by the Parish Council, it will be added to the agenda of the next meeting. The response will then be communicated via the minutes of the meeting.

Posts by individual councillors
If a parish councillor, who is not the nominated councillor, chooses to engage in any online communication, the parish councillor should make it clear that any posts are personal opinions and do not represent the view of the Parish Council. Parish councillors should refrain from posting controversial or inflammatory remarks or presenting political views. Personal attacks, online fights or hostile arguments should be avoided and the privacy of other councillors and residents respected.

Conclusion
The over-riding purpose of any online or social media communication is to provide residents with an additional source of information. It is not designed to replace other official channels of communication, rather to enable more members of the local community to understand the work of the council and to promote greater knowledge of the council's processes, actions and decisions.