

Social Media Policy

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1. Social Media Policy

The Town Council understands that social media and networking websites have become a regular part of everyday life and that many people enjoy membership of sites such as Facebook and Twitter. This policy is to provide councillors and staff with guidelines on responsibilities of use.

2. Why is the Town Council using social media?

The Town Council's aim is to inform members of the community and the wider local area, through as many communication channels as possible, about what is happening within the Town and local area and share important news and information. The Town Council's social media channels supplement the information published on its website, notice boards and in any newsletters. The Town Council can remind people of important events and alert followers instantly to breaking news. The Town Council can link to interesting and useful information about the Town and local area published by other people. The Town Council can better communicate with those using mobile devices.

3. Use of Official Accounts

The Town Council operates both a Facebook and **Instagram** account for the promotion of activities and events and as a communication and broadcast tool.

Examples of acceptable corporate content are:

a) Marketing campaigns b) Consultation documents c) News feed & emergency information d) Event listings e) Key dates f) Short debates & quick comments on hot topics and relevant news (discussion board) g) Information gathering h) Useful links.

4. The following outlines the limits of their use:

An official account on any social media website may only be set-up with consent from the Town Council. Once approved, each account will be set up by the Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk. Only authorised staff may use these accounts to post online and access to the account is strictly limited. The Town Council's social media accounts are managed and monitored daily by the Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk.

Only officers of the Council are allowed to post links to the Town Council website, partner websites, 'Useful' links for example local transport sites etc, links to other Facebook pages, local media e.g. Glamorgan Star, Nub News, National news.

If Town Councillors set up their own 'Councillor' Facebook page, it is recommended to 'pin' on the page that any comments, posts or articles published are that of the individual not of the Town Council.

All information published on the Internet must comply with the Town Council's confidentiality policy and data protection. Social media accounts will primarily be used to promote the 'good news' and information, supplementing content already published

on the Town Council's website.

Any employee, councillor or member of the public who becomes aware of social networking activity that would be deemed distasteful should make the Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk aware as soon as possible.

5. Facebook

Facebook posts are used to highlight news, make announcements, engage with the community and share information. Posts will mostly have comments turned off, unless they specifically invite a response.

Comments posted and messages received on the Facebook page are views of the named individuals and do not represent the views of the Town Council.

A request for something to be posted on the Town Council's Facebook page should be directed to the Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk.

6. Social media moderation policy

- The Town Council Facebook page is reactively moderated. The Council cannot accept responsibility for the content of any comment.
- The Council reserves the right to remove comments received on Facebook that:
 - Contains abusive, obscene, indecent, hate or offensive language, or link to obscene or offensive material
 - Contain swear words or other sorts of profanity
 - Are completely removed from the topic of conversation or are not relevant to the item posted
 - Contain abusive language towards an individual involved in the thread, other organisations or the page administrator
 - Constitute spam or promote or advertise products, except where it is for an event, publication or similar item that has direct relevance to the subject of discussion. Information about locating and sharing knowledge and expertise is welcomed, but within the specific discussion
 - Are designed to cause nuisance to the page administrator or other users.
 - For serious and/or persistent breaches of the moderation policy, we reserve the right to block and/or prevent users from posting further comments.

7. Use of Photos and Video

Only the Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk has permission to upload photos and videos. The appropriate permissions must be obtained for all imagery.

8. Personal Accounts on Social Media

Staff need to use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the terms of their contract of employment. The absence of, or lack of, explicit reference to a specific website or service does not limit the extent of the application of this policy.

Cathy Kennedy
Town Clerk

Where no policy or guidelines exist, employees should use their professional judgment and take the most prudent action possible. If the Town Council is referred to in a way that is deemed defamatory or confidential information is disclosed, it reserves the right to report the comment and request that it be removed.

Councillors are at liberty to set up accounts using any of the tools available but should ensure they are clearly identified as personal and do not in any way imply that they reflect the Council's view. Councillors should at all times present a professional image and not disclose anything of a confidential nature. Comments of a derogatory, proprietary or libelous nature should not be made and care should be taken to avoid guesswork, exaggeration and 'colorful' language.

9. Purdah

In the six-week run up to an election – local or general – councils and councillors should be careful not to do or say anything that could be viewed in any way to support any political party or candidate. The period is known as purdah. The Council will continue to publish important service announcements using social media but will monitor and potentially have to remove responses if they are overtly party political.

10. Will the Town Council respond to direct messages posted on social networking sites?

If appropriate, the Clerk and Deputy Clerk will endeavor to respond as quickly as possible to all questions received via social networking sites. All formal requests, comments, enquiries, compliments or complaints should be emailed to the Town Council using the contact form on the website.

11. Rules

The Town Council may monitor forums and blogs to gain indirect feedback. The Town Council may post replies on forums or blogs to answer queries or address factual corrections but would generally take a cautious approach before getting involved in contentious issues.

The Town Council reserves the right to take any necessary steps to protect members of the community and will delete any comments referencing the Town Council, which are deemed abusive or offensive in any way.