CYNGOR TREF
LLANFYLLIN
TOWN COUNCIL

# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

## LLANFYLLIN TOWN COUNCIL

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## 1 Overview

Social media is a blanket term applied to online multimedia tools used for creating content and two-way communication. They can be accessed via smartphones, PCs, laptops, tablets, or smart TVs. All social media accounts are free of charge and can be set up quickly and easily from an internet page.

Members with personal social media pages are advised not to pin posts or highlighted sections stating they are a Town Councillor. If a member wishes residents to be aware they are a member of the Town Council, they are advised to set up a specific “Town Councillor” page.

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## 2 Policy Statement

This policy helps ensure appropriate use of social media such as X (formerly Twitter), META (Facebook), Instagram, LinkedIn, and similar platforms.

It sets out standards for employees and members, outlines monitoring arrangements, and explains the action that may be taken in the event of a breach.

## 3 Policy Scope

This policy does not restrict Councillors from expressing views but asks that they consider how comments may be perceived. Comments should never be politically divisive, disrespectful, or bring the Town Council into disrepute.

Members must:

- Avoid disrespectful or bullying comments about staff or councillors.
- Focus comments on issues, not individuals.
- Review personal privacy settings regularly.
- Remember that there is no distinction between “councillor-branded” and personal accounts when commenting publicly.
- Consider adding a disclaimer such as “Views are my own, not those of Llanfyllin Town Council.”

## 4 Administration & Management

The Town Council’s official social media pages will be administered and managed by the Support Officer(s), in consultation with the Clerk, as agreed by the Full Council.

- Privacy settings will be set at levels agreed by the Council and reviewed regularly.
- Passwords will not be shared with anyone not authorised to administer the pages.
- Pages will be monitored during the working week; weekend activity will be reviewed on the next working day.

### 4.1 Use of Posts and Comments

The Council’s social media pages are primarily used to share information, announcements, and updates. Comments will generally be disabled on posts. Administrators are volunteers who do not have the capacity to monitor and moderate comments consistently and promptly, which could lead to delays in addressing inappropriate or offensive content. Disabling comments helps to ensure that the Council's social media pages remain safe and appropriately managed, even with limited administrative resources.

On occasions where comments are enabled (for example, on specific consultation posts), they will be monitored as time allows and moderated as needed.

The Council will not use social media to engage in extended dialogue or debate.

The Council reserves the right to disable or suspend comments and sharing functions at any time, at the discretion of the Support Officer(s) in consultation with the Clerk.

Offensive, inappropriate and personal attacks or insults directed at individuals will be removed. If someone repeatedly engages in such behaviour, they may be banned from accessing all Council pages.

If an individual has three comments removed for being in breach of the guidelines within a rolling 3-month period, the Council will block them from all social media pages. The individual will be notified of the action and advised of the appeal process.

4.2 Moderation

- A moderation and profanity blocklist will be used to prevent the posting of offensive language or spam.
- All users will be treated equally in enforcement of these standards.

## 5 Appeal Process

In the event of an individual being blocked from the Town Council's social media pages they will be notified via a private message of the reason for the decision. They will also be notified how to appeal against the decision.

The individual will have a period of twenty working days to appeal from the date of the original notification by the Administrator that they have been blocked from the site. The individual will be required to provide a written statement stating their argument for re-instatement to view and comment on the Town Council's social media pages.

The Town Council will consider the individuals appeal at the next available meeting following receipt of the appeal and inform the individual of the outcome in writing within twenty working days of the meeting.

## 6 Using Social Media

The Council recognises the importance of the internet in shaping public thinking about the Council and the support and services it provides to the community. It also recognises the importance of our employees, volunteers and members joining in and helping shape community conversation and direction through interaction in social media.

- Before using social media on any matter which might affect the interests of the Council you must have read and understood this policy.
- Members and employees may report on council decisions and their individual views on their personal social media pages but must not purport to be representing the Town Council as a corporate body within these comments.

## 7 Rules for use of social media

Whenever you are permitted to use social media in accordance with this policy, you must adhere to the following general rules:

- Do not upload, post, or forward a link to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content.
- Any employee/ member who feel that they have been harassed or bullied or are offended by material posted or uploaded by a colleague onto a social media website should inform the Clerk.
- Never disclose commercially sensitive, personal private or confidential information. If you are unsure whether the information you wish to share falls within one of these categories, you should discuss this with the Clerk.
- Do not upload, post, or forward any content belonging to a third party unless you have that third party's consent. Before you include a link to a third-party website, check that any terms and conditions of that website permit you to link to it.

- When making use of any social media platform, you must read and comply with its terms of use.
- Be honest and open but be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people's perceptions of the Council.
- You are personally responsible for content you publish into social media tools.
- Do not escalate heated discussions, try to be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations.
- Do not discuss colleagues without their prior approval.
- Always consider others' privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory e.g. politics and religion. Remember that although it is acceptable to make political points or canvass votes via your own social media accounts this will not be permissible if you are commenting on behalf of the Council.
- Avoid publishing your contact details where they can be accessed and used widely by people you did not intend to see them and never publish anyone else's contact details.

## 8 Policy Review

This policy will remain a working document and will be amended as required based on the experiences and activities which occur when administering the social media pages. As a minimum, it will be reviewed annually to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.