



HOLYWELL TOWN COUNCIL

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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1. PURPOSE

The Town Council have decided to utilise social media as a means of improving and enhancing communication with the Holywell community and external agencies. The social media platforms include but are not limited to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The following are some examples of how social media will be utilised:

- To post information about and promote forthcoming events, e.g. music festivals, Christmas lights switch on, etc.
- To post relevant information relating to the town, e.g. road closures, planning matters.
- To facilitate debate and consultation, e.g. community matters, community meetings.
- To signpost local residents and the wider public to relevant sources of information.
- To inform the public of the purpose and remit of the Town Council and the scope of its powers.
- Network with other organisations, e.g. Wales in Bloom, Flintshire County Council and other Town and Community Councils.
- Link to the Town Council website to obtain further information on the Council's activities.

2. POLICY GUIDELINES

The policy does not exist to gag councillors or prevent them expressing views. However, consideration must be given to any comments made which may be seen as politically sensitive, divisive, or bringing the Town Council into disrepute. Any comments made must not be disrespectful to staff and/or other councillors or be seen as bullying. All comments made should focus on the issues and not individuals. In addition, councillors are asked to be mindful of:

- a) Personal privacy settings on their own social media pages.
- b) Comments made on personal social media pages. It should be noted that there is no difference between a councillor branded account and a personal account when posting comments and views.
- c) Considering adding a disclaimer to personal accounts that views expressed are their own, not that of the Town Council.

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.

3. ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

The Following guidelines are for the administration and management of the social media pages.

1. The social media pages will be administered and managed by the Support Officer, in consultation with the Clerk.
2. The Support Officer will monitor the pages on a daily basis during the week.
3. Any activity on the pages which occurs over a weekend period will be considered on the first available working day.
4. The Resources Committee will consider any activity of concern on the pages once a quarter and report findings to the Full Council.
5. Individuals who choose to comment on the pages will all be treated equally.
6. The social media pages are primarily used as means of sharing information. The Council will only respond to comments as deemed appropriate and social media will not be used to enter into any longer term dialogue with any individual or group of individuals.
7. The Council reserve the right to suspend the comments/share functions from certain posts, at the discretion of the Support Officer, in consultation with the Clerk.
8. Any comments made on the pages which are perceived to be offensive and/or unacceptable will be removed at the discretion of the Support Officer, in consultation with the Clerk.
9. If an individual has three comments removed for being in breach of the guidelines within a rolling 6 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. APPEAL PROCESS

In the event of an individual being blocked from the Town Council's social media pages they will be notified via a personal 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 20 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 Resources Committee 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 20 working days of the meeting.

5. EXTERNAL THIRD PARTY SITES

Threats and intimidation to the Council's staff, councillors and their families will not be tolerated. Legal action may be taken in relation to defamation and slander against the Council, and any criminal damage reported to the Police.

6. GENERAL INFORMATION

The privacy settings will be set in accordance with the levels agreed by the Full Council and will be reviewed on regular basis.

The password will never be shared with anyone not authorised to administer the site.

All councillors and administrators of the site will not post and share personal information – especially information that could be used to identify or locate them offline, such as addresses and telephone numbers.

The Moderation Blocklist – This will be used to prevent keywords from appearing on the Town Council’s pages. When individuals include blacklisted keywords in a post or comment on the page, the content will be automatically marked as spam. The Profanity Blocklist will also be used which will block the most commonly reported words and phrases marked as offensive by the broader community.

All Holywell Town Council Policies are approved by full council and subject to an annual review.

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Town Mayor & Chairman of the Council