



REDRUTH TOWN COUNCIL

REDRUTH TOWN COUNCIL SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- 1.1 The availability and use of social networking applications brings opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with our audiences in new ways, Redruth Town Council must use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly.
- 1.2 It is also important that the Council balances this with its duties to its service users and partners as well as its legal responsibilities and its reputation.
- 1.3 The Council will use social media in a safe, appropriate and purposeful way to engage and interact with the public, stakeholders, opinion formers, the media and employees in support of the Council's strategic vision and key policy objectives.
- 1.4 The Council's use of social media sites will always be consistent with the Council's duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults, in accordance with relevant statutory requirements and service-specific protocols.
- 1.5 The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice.
- 1.6 The purpose of this policy is:
 - To minimise the reputational, legal and governance risks to Redruth Town Council and its employees arising from the use of social media by staff in a professional (work-related) capacity
 - To enable the safe use of social media for communication, engagement, customer service and service delivery
 - To ensure a consistent approach is applied across the Council focused on achieving business objectives, improving customer satisfaction and that the reputation of the Council is not adversely affected
 - To ensure that our users can clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the Council.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy covers the use of social networking applications by Council employees, elected Members and partners or other third parties (including contractors and volunteers) acting on behalf of the Council. This includes but is not limited to someone who identifies themselves as an employee, Member or any other person employed (or contracted either directly or indirectly) by the Council or is working on the Council's behalf. These groups are referred to collectively as 'Council Representatives' for brevity.
- 2.2 This policy is designed to cover **work-related** use of social media, including:
 - Council Representatives use of social media as a communications channel where the content, information or services are being provided by or accessed, or on behalf of, the Council
 - Access to social and streaming media sites by Council Representatives in the course of their professional duties from devices on the Council's network. Examples include, but are not limited to, monitoring feedback about a service (e.g. TripAdvisor reviews, Facebook comments) or accessing materials to support learning and development (e.g. training videos on YouTube)
 - Participation on social media sites not managed by Council Representatives where contributions are posted directly in a professional capacity (e.g. contributing to a

professional forum). Contributions include, but are not limited to, text, photographs and video.

- 2.3 This policy **does not** cover personal use of social media or streaming media sites by Council Representatives.
- 2.4 Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:
- Blogs
 - Online discussion forums
 - Collaborative spaces
 - Media sharing services, for example, YouTube.
 - 'Micro-blogging' applications, for example, X (formerly Twitter).
- 2.5 Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of online presence such as virtual worlds and website checking services and the use of these services should be discussed with the Town Clerk.
- 2.6 All Council Representatives should know the information they share through social networking applications, even if in private spaces, is still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and any other legislation. They must also operate in line with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.

3. ENFORCEMENT

- 3.1 Any breach of the terms set out below could result in the application or offending content being removed in accordance with the published complaints procedure and the publishing rights of the responsible Council representative being suspended.
- 3.2 The Town Clerk reserves the right to require the closure of any applications or removal of content published by Council Representatives that may adversely affect the reputation of the Council or put it at risk of legal action.
- 3.3 Any communications or content published that causes damage to the Council, any of its employees, or any third party's reputation, may amount to misconduct or gross misconduct to which the Council's internal Disciplinary Policy applies.
- 3.4 Employees are responsible for upholding this Policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media must be reported promptly to the employee's line manager.
- 3.5 Line managers will ensure that their employees are aware of this policy (and all other relevant policies and guidance related to the professional and personal use of social and streaming media). Line managers are responsible for ensuring that their employees act in accordance with this policy's requirements.
- 3.6 If any employee is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to the Council's disciplinary procedure. If a criminal offence is considered to have been committed, further action may be taken to assist in the prosecution of the offenders.
- 3.7 The Council's HR will provide all staff with basic awareness training on digital and social media.

4. POLICY

- 4.1 All new proposals for using social networking applications as part of a Council service (whether they are hosted by the Council or by a third party) must be approved by the Town Clerk first.
- 4.2 Social networking applications unrelated to any Council services (for example, contributing to a wiki provided by a professional association) do not need to be approved by the Clerk. However, Council representatives must still operate in line with the requirements set out below.
- 4.3 Council representatives must adhere to the following Terms of Use. The Terms of Use below apply to all uses of social networking applications by all Council representatives. This includes, but is not limited to:
- public-facing applications such as open discussion forums

- internally facing uses such as project blogs regardless of whether they are hosted on corporate networks or not.

4.4 Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. The Council expects that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use.

5. TERMS OF USE

5.1 Social networking applications

- must not be used to publish any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claims for damages. This includes but is not limited to material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring the Council into disrepute
- must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner
- must not be used for actions that would put Council representatives in breach of Council codes of conduct or policies relating to Members or staff
- must not breach the Council's Equal Opportunities or Bullying and Harassment policies
- official Council and Mayoral profiles and pages must not be used for party political purposes or specific campaigning purposes as the Council is not permitted to publish material which 'in whole or part appears to affect public support for a political party' (LGA 1986)
- official Council and Mayoral profiles and pages must not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests or personal campaigns.

5.2 Where individuals, including those from partner organisations and other volunteers, are involved and are acting on behalf of the Council, they will also be expected to comply with the relevant Council policies.

5.3 Members of the public and other users of online services must know when a social networking application is being used for official Council purposes. All council representatives must adhere to the following requirements:

- a. Officers must only use @redruth.gov.uk or the library information service email addresses for user accounts which will be used for official Council purposes.
- b. Social networking applications managed by Council representatives must provide appropriate feedback, while complaints or information must be published in a prominent place that is easily accessible to other users.
- c. The use of the Council's logo and other branding elements should be used where appropriate to indicate the Council's support. The logo should not be used on social networking applications which are unrelated to or are not representative of the Council's official position.
- d. Council representatives should identify themselves as such where appropriate on social networking applications, i.e. through providing additional information in user profiles.
- e. Council representatives should ensure that any contributions they make are professional and uphold the reputation of the Council.
- f. Members, if using their own social media account profiles, must ensure that they are either speaking in a personal capacity or simply providing details of works undertaken or policies agreed by Redruth Town Council and not speaking on behalf of the Council.
- g. All Council representatives need to be aware that applications may be closed for a defined period before local and national elections in order to comply with legislation which affects local authorities.

6. POLICY REVIEW

6.1 This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Current review: July 2024

Next Review: July 2025

6.2 The policy will also be examined when a formal complaint is made to identify any areas requiring improvement.

APPENDIX: LIST OF OFFICIAL COUNCIL SOCIAL MEDIA

X (formerly Twitter):

Visit Redruth - @VisitRedruth (not currently active)

Facebook:

Red Ruth (Person profile) - <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100010546187947>

Pages Managed:

Discover Redruth- www.facebook.com/Discoverredruth

Mayor of Redruth – <https://www.facebook.com/MayorofRedruth>

Redruth Town Markets – <https://www.facebook.com/RedruthTownMarkets/>

Redruth Town Council – <https://www.facebook.com/RedruthTownCouncil/>

Redruth Library & Information Services - <https://www.facebook.com/redruthlis/>

Instagram:

Discover Redruth – www.instagram.com/discoverredruth/

Redruth Library & Information Services - <https://www.instagram.com/redruthlibrary/>

LinkedIn:

Red Ruth (Person Profile)- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/red-ruth-104b62218/>

Redruth Town Council - <https://www.linkedin.com/company/79773277/admin/feed/posts/>

Spotify:

Redruth Recorded -

<https://open.spotify.com/show/0Vq5cAYM6RaNbYOI1V8Vo6?si=0e3f8667b7ff494b&nd=1&dlsi=711c85d7bc1a4285>