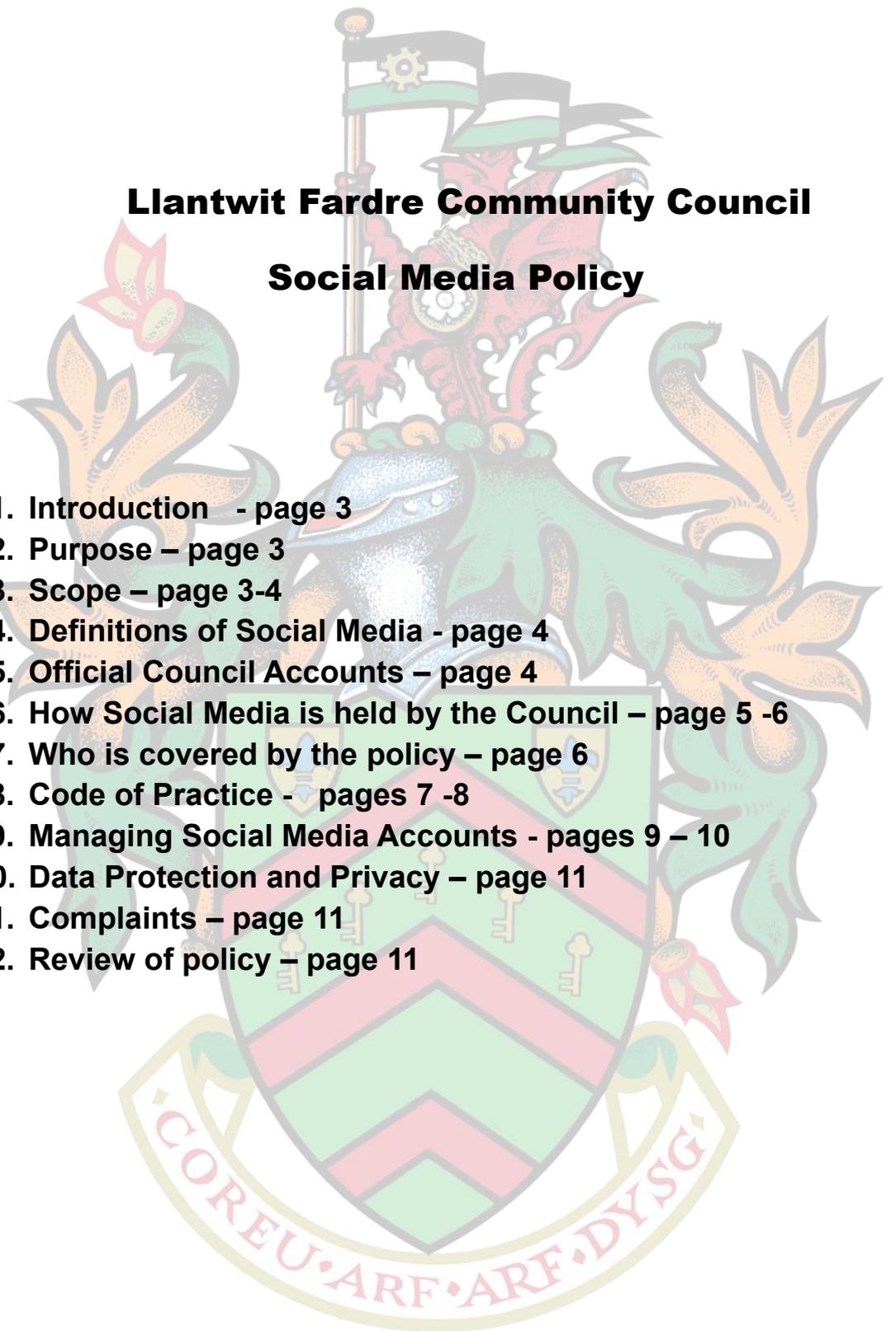


LLANTWIT FARDRE COMMUNITY COUNCIL



The background of the page features a large, faint watermark of the coat of arms of Llantwit Fardre Community Council. The coat of arms is a heraldic shield with a chevron pattern of red and green. Above the shield is a crest depicting a red dragon holding a golden gear. The shield is supported by two golden lions. A banner at the bottom of the shield contains the Welsh motto 'COREU ARF ARF DYSG'.

Llantwit Fardre Community Council

Social Media Policy

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1. Introduction

Social media is a term for website based on user participation and user-generated content, including social media sites and other sites that are centred on user interaction.

The Council recognises that that social media provides a valuable opportunity to communicate with residents, promote local initiatives and enhance transparency in the Council's work. However, its use must be balanced with the need to maintain professionalism, comply with legal obligations and protect the reputation of the Council.

This policy is consistent with good practice guidance issued by **One Voice Wales** and the **Society of Local Clerks (SLCC)**

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Establish clear guidelines for appropriate use of social media by the Council
- Ensure that communications are accurate, professional and lawful
- Protect the Council's reputation and integrity
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation and governance requirements
- Clarify the responsibilities of Councillors, officers and authorised users.

3. Scope

This policy applies to

- all elected Members of the Council,
- Council staff or
- any individual authorised to post content on behalf of the Council.
- The use of social media where an individual may reasonably be perceived as representing the Council.

The policy is intended to help Councillors and staff make appropriate decisions about the use of social-media and to outline Llantwit Fardre Community Council's position on various aspects of its use, including the management of comments made by members of the public when using Llantwit Fardre Community Council's social media sites.

It includes standards and guidance for Councillors and Council Staff to observe when using social media as a channel for communication, the management of public comments, and the action to be taken in respect to breaches of this policy.

4. Definitions of Social Media

This policy covers all forms of social media and social networking sites which include (but are not limited to)

- Llantwit Fardre Community Council's Website
- Facebook
- X (Formerly known as Twitter and other social networking sites)
- Blogs and discussion forums
- E-Mail

This policy supplements and should be read in conjunction with all other policies and procedures adopted by Llantwit Fardre Community Council. The current Code of Conduct applies to online activity in the same way it does to other written or verbal communication.

Over time Llantwit Fardre Community Council may add to its channels of communication that it uses as it seeks to improve and expand to reflect any new arrangements. This policy may be amended at any time.

5. Official Council Accounts

The Council may operate official social media accounts for the purpose of disseminating information to the public

- a) Official accounts shall be created only with the approval of Council
- b) The **Clerk** shall normally be responsible for the administration and management of these accounts
- c) Login credentials and account ownership shall remain under the control of the Council at all times
- d) Appropriate security measures shall be implemented to prevent unauthorised access.

6. How Social Media will be used by the Council

Social media may be used for:

- Engagement with individuals and communities for the promotion of Council based services decisions and actions.
- Supporting local democracy
- Distribute in whole or part information from Council notices, agendas, approved minutes and dates of meetings.
- Information specifically agreed to be communicated via social media at Council meetings
- Advertising events and activities that Llantwit Fardre Community Council has organised or co-organised or supports as being beneficial for the community.
- Sharing good news stories relevant to the local area
- Announcing new information relevant to people living in and around the Llantwit Fardre Community Council area
- Providing and exchanging information about local services and events
- Support community cohesion, neighbourliness, and resilience
- Gathering local resident's insights
- Promoting cultural events and tourism in the area
- Advertising vacancies
- Re-post or share relevant information from partner agencies such as Principal Authorities, Police, Library, and Health etc
- Post or share relevant information from local Post other items as the Council see fit.
- Refer residents' queries via social media to the Clerk for wider dissemination to Councillors if required community groups for community benefit such as information from community groups, schools, sports clubs etc.

Councillors and council staff should be aware that not all communication through social media requires a response, although an acknowledgement should be made if appropriate.

Llantwit Fardre Community Council operates its social media pages so that it can pass information on to residents quickly. The social media accounts are checked regularly however posts will not necessarily be responded to. Llantwit Fardre Community Council's social media accounts are primarily a tool to pass information on to our residents.

As a Council Llantwit Fardre Community Council are keen to hear residents view, it will not be able to take comments made on its social media accounts as official comments, particularly on planning applications. In order to manage the

messages received, residents will be asked – if necessary -to forward their comments to the Community Council via email to the Clerk or by writing in to the Community Council Office.

Social media **shall not be used to conduct formal business or decision-making**, which must take place in accordance with statutory procedures at properly convened meetings

7. Who is covered by this policy

The principles of this policy apply to elected and co-opted Members, council staff and volunteers.

All Councillors and staff are expected to always comply with this policy to protect the reputation, privacy, confidentiality, and interest of the Council, its services, employees and community.

Individual Community Councillors and council staff are responsible for what they post, both in a council and personal capacity

In the main Councillors and staff have the same legal duties online as anyone else, but failure to comply with the law may have more serious consequences.

The Council may take disciplinary action in respect of serious breaches of this policy by employees. This may include unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, racially offensive comments or ther by an employee.

The Councillors Code of Conduct shall apply to online activity in the same way it does to other written or verbal communication. Councillors must bear in mind that inappropriate conduct can still attract adverse publicity, even where the code does not apply.

Councillors and staff must remember that communications on the internet are permanent and public.

When communicating in a private group it should be ensured that the Council would be content with the statement should it be made public.

A Councillor or members of staff behaviour on any social media site must be consistent with the behaviour required generally.

8. Code of Practice

Councillors and staff must be mindful when using social media sites of the information they post in both a personal and council capacity and keep the tone of any comments respectful and informative.

Members of the Council and its staff should not post comments they would not be prepared to make in writing or face-to-face.

When participating in online communication, Councillors and staff must:

- Be responsible and respectful. Ensuring posts are positive, informative and balanced.
- Respect privacy of their councillors, staff and residents,
- Keep the tone of comments respectful and informative, never condescending or 'loud' i.e. use sentence case format and not write in capital letters or red to emphasise points.
- Seek permission to publish original photos or videos (posting copyright images or text on social media sites is an offence so Councillors and staff must ensure any information does not infringe copyright)
- Always disclose their identity and affiliation to the Council, and never hide their identity using false names or pseudonyms.
- Be objective, balanced, informative, and accurate.
- Spell and grammar check everything,

Llantwit Fardre Community Councillors and its staff must **not** :

- Give out the personal data of others on social media, including home address and telephone numbers
- Use an individual's name in a social media communication or post information about an individual unless given written permission to do so (publishing personal data of individuals without permission is a breach of Data Protection legislation)
- Present personal opinions as that of Llantwit Fardre Community Council. If a Councillor or member of staff blogs, tweets or communicates online personally, and not in the role as an elected Member or member of staff, they must not claim to act or give the impression they are acting as a representative of the Council i.e. they should not include web links to official Council websites, Council logos,

Council emails or any other Council identification as this may give or reinforce the impression that they are representing the Council

- Present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment to the Council; they must protect the good reputation of Llantwit Fardre Community Council.
- Make false or misleading statements
- Post personal or political content, content that is contrary to the democratic decisions of the Council or post controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks.
- Make any defamatory, discriminatory, derogatory or offensive comments about any person including council staff , Councillors , the Council or about the people , businesses the Council works with ,or post online activity that constitutes bullying or harassment . Language that may be deemed offensive relating in particular to race, sexuality, disability gender, age etc should not be published on any social media sites
- Engage in personal attacks, online fights, hostile communication or in any other ways that damage the working relationship with others.
- Post any information that may be deemed libel (publishing untrue statements about a person which is damaging to their reputation is libel and can result in a court action)
- Conduct any online activity that violates the laws set.
- Publish any photographs or videos of minors without parental or guardian permission
- Bring the Council into disrepute, including through the content posted in a personal capacity.

Councillors' views posted in any capacity in advance of matters to be debated by the Council at a Council or Committee meeting may constitute Pre-disposition, Predetermination or Bias and may require the individual to declare an interest at Council meeting.

Anyone with concerns regarding content placed on social media site that vilifies Members, staff or residents should report them to the Clerk for a referral to the moderator and/ or the Council as required.

9. Managing Social Media Accounts

The Clerk and Assistant Clerk with approval from the Clerk will be responsible for posting content on the Council's website and social media platforms.

The Council appoint a moderator, usually the Clerk, to moderate the Council's social media output and will be responsible for monitoring the content to ensure it complies with the policy.

The Clerk or any Councillor also acting as moderator will have authority, without notice or comment to remove any post from council's social media pages which are deemed to be of an inflammatory or libellous nature. Such post may be reported to the hosts (e.g. Facebook etc) and to the Clerk of the Community Council for Council records.

The Clerk to the Council or any Councillor acting as a moderator will also have the authority to block or ban access from an individual or company's account to Llantwit Fardre Community Council's social media platforms.

Llantwit Fardre Community Council when participating in online communications will generally allow posts on its platforms from members of the public that are respectful, respect the privacy of other councillors, staff, and residents and that are objective, balanced and accurate.

Posts may be deleted, and the holder of an account banned if a comment or post

- Makes any intentionally false or misleading statements
- Mentions an individual name in social media posts or communications about individuals unless deemed reasonable (publishing data of individuals without permission is a breach of Data Protection legislation.
- Makes any defamatory, discriminatory, derogatory or offensive comments about any person including council staff, Councillors, the Council or about the people , businesses the Council works with ,or post online activity that constitutes bullying or harassment .
- Conduct any online activity that violates the laws set.
- Includes the publication of any photographs or videos of minors without parental or guardian permission
- Includes any information that may be deemed libel (publishing untrue statements about a person which is damaging to their reputation is libel and can result in court action)
- Containing any obscene material (this is a criminal offence and is subject to a custodial sentence)

The Council's moderator is ultimately responsible for the deciding whether the posts should be deleted, blocked .

The Clerk to Llantwit Fardre Community Council will also be responsible for checking the correct security settings are in place on the social media platforms.

Council Member may assist the Clerk to disseminate information however all must ensure they follow the policy.

No Social Media account details may be changed without the permission of the Llantwit Fardre Community Council or its Clerk.

10. Data Protection and Privacy

The Council will comply with the requirements of **UK data protection legislation** when operating social media accounts.

Personal data will not be published unless there is a lawful basis for doing so. Members of the public should be discouraged from sharing personal information on public platforms.

11. Complaints

Any complaints relating to the Council's use of social media should be submitted through the Council's **formal complaints procedure**.

Complaints concerning councillors may be addressed under the relevant **Code of Conduct** procedures.

12. Review of Policy

This policy shall be reviewed periodically by the Council, or sooner if changes in legislation, guidance or operational requirements necessitate revision.

Adopted by: Llantwit Fardre Community Council

Date adopted:

Review date:

