



LLANGYBI FAWR COMMUNITY COUNCIL SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

ADOPTED ON: March 4th 2024

Policy statement

This policy is intended to help councillors and council staff to make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as emails, Facebook, and other relevant social media websites.

The Council will encourage the use of social media for the purposes of:-

- Providing and exchanging information about services
- Supporting local democracy
- Gathering citizen insights and managing citizen relationships
- Promoting cultural events
- Supporting community cohesion, neighbourliness and resilience
- Creating internal communications, learning and development

This policy outlines the standards the Council requires councillors and staff to observe when using social media, the circumstances in which the Council will monitor the use of social media and the action to be taken in respect of breaches of this policy.

This policy supplements and should be read in conjunction with all other policies and procedures adopted by the Council, such as the Equal Opportunities Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Data Protection Policy, Disciplinary Procedure, Members Code of Conduct and such like.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

Who is covered by this policy?

This policy covers all elected and co-opted councillors, the Clerk to the Council and all other volunteers (collectively referred to as staff in this policy).

The scope of this policy:

The Council has a corporate presence on the web and the use of email

The Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications. We may ask those who contact us for their preferred channel of communication when we deal with them.

All members and staff are expected to comply with this policy at all times to protect the reputation, privacy, confidentiality and interests of the Council, its services, employees, partners and community.

Serious breaches of this policy by employees may be dealt with under the Employee Disciplinary Procedure.

The Council may take disciplinary action in respect of unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually orientated or racially offensive comments by the employee.

Breach of the policy by volunteers will result in the Council no longer using their services and if necessary, appropriate action will be taken. Behaviour required by the Members' Code of Conduct shall apply to online activity in the same way it does to other written or verbal communication. Members will bear in mind that inappropriate conduct can still attract adverse publicity, even where the code does not apply. Remarks are easily withdrawn, apologised for and forgotten when made in person, but posting them on the internet means that they have been published in a way that cannot be contained. Online content should be objective, balanced, informed and accurate. Members must be aware that their profile as a councillor means the more likely it is they will be seen as acting in an official capacity when blogging or networking. It must be remembered 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.

Rules for using social media

Staff and councillors must not allow their interaction on any websites or blogs to damage their working relationships with others. They must not make any derogatory, discriminatory, defamatory or offensive comments about other staff, councillors, the Council or about the people, businesses and agencies that the Council works with and serves.

Posts must not contain anyone's personal information other than necessary basic contact details.

If staff or councillors blog or tweet personally and not in their role as a councillor, they must not act, claim to act or give the impression that they are acting as a representative of the Council. They should not include web links to official Council websites as this may give or reinforce the impression that they are representing the Council.

All staff and councillors must ensure that they use Council facilities appropriately. If using a Council-provided website, blog site or social networking area, any posts made will be viewed as made in an official capacity. Do not use Council facilities for personal or political blogs.

The Clerk will be responsible for informing the website manager of new content on Council pages and ensure compliance with the Social Media Policy. The Clerk (as Facebook page admin) will have authority to immediately without notice or comment, remove any posts from the Council's social media pages if they are deemed to be inflammatory or of a defamatory or libellous nature; any councillor may request the clerk to do so. Such posts will also be reported to the Hosts (i.e. Facebook) and the Clerk can opt to have post approval on social media pages (i.e. Facebook) to ensure inappropriate content is not displayed.

The website may be used to:-

Post notices and minutes of meetings

Advertise events and activities

Post good news stories

Link to appropriate websites or press page if those sites meet the Council's expectations of conduct

Advertise vacancies

Share information from partners i.e. Police, library, district council etc.

Announce new information appropriate to the Council

Post of share information promoting bodies for community benefit.

Post other items as the Council see fit.

Facebook may be used to support the website and its information as above.

Staff and individual community councillors are responsible for what they post. They are personally responsible for any online activity conducted via their published e-mail address which is used for Council business. Both clerk and councillors have separate council and personal email addresses.

All social media sites in use should be checked on a regular basis to ensure that the security settings are in place.

When participating in online communication, staff and councillors must:-

Be responsible and respectful; be direct, informative, brief and transparent

Always disclose their identity and affiliation to the Council

Never made false or misleading statements

Not present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment. They must protect the good reputation of the Council

Be mindful of the information posted on sites and make sure personal opinions are not published as being that of the Council

Keep the tone of comments respectful and informative, never condescending or 'loud'. Use sentence case format, not capital letters, do not write in red to emphasise points

Refrain from posting controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks. Language that may be deemed as offensive relating in particular to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age, religion or belief should not be published on any social media site

Avoid personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications

Do not post comments that you would not be prepared to make in writing or face to face

Never name an individual third party unless you have written permission to do so

Seek permission to publish original photographs or video from the persons or organisations in the video or

photographs before they are uploaded. You must check that there is parental permission before photos of children are used

Respect the privacy of other councillors, staff and residents

Never post any information or conduct any online activity that may violate laws or regulations such as libel and copyright

Spell and grammar check everything

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

If a matter that is raised in any form of social media needs further consideration by the Council it may be raised at either the open forum or as full agenda item for consideration by a quorum of councillors. Again the 'poster' shall be informed via the page or direct message that this is the case and invited to contact the Clerk direct. Any response agreed by the Council will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Reports of any concerns regarding content placed on social media sites should be reported to the Clerk and/or Council as required.

The Policy will be reviewed annually.

Date of Policy: March 2024

Date of council meeting policy was reviewed: 4th March 2024

Policy to be reviewed by: March 2025