



CHIRK TOWN COUNCIL
CYNGOR TREF Y WAUN

Social Media Policy

March 2022

Adapted and amended from the One Voice Wales & SLCC model policy.

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| Date due to review: | 1 year (2023) |
| Policy version: | 3 V1 adopted in 27/09/2017 Reviewed 18/03/2019 |
| Policy type: | Recommended |



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The use of digital and social media enables better and more direct contact between Chirk Town Council, local residents and businesses it serves, and the agencies it works and liaises with.
- 1.2 Social media is a collective term for the ways to create and publish information via the internet and for the purpose of this policy refers to the Council's website, You Tube Channel and Facebook pages only.
- 1.3 This policy details how Chirk Town Council will use social media to improve and expand the ways in which it communicates with its local residents, local businesses and various government agencies it deals with.
- 1.4 Social media provides an alternative channel to written correspondence, telephone and face to face conversation to enable the Council to inform and respond to questions and queries raised by people who live in, work in and visit the Chirk community.
- 1.5 Use of digital and social media will improve communication between the Council and the people, businesses and organisations it serves and works with.
- 1.6 Chirk Town Council has a corporate presence on the web and an e-mail channel which it uses to communicate with residents, as well as those working in and visiting the Town. The Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications, and the Clerk and/or members may ask for a preferred channel of communication.
- 1.7 Over time the Council may add to the channels of communication that it uses as it seeks to improve and expand the communication offer. When these changes occur the Social Media Policy will be updated.

2. Policy statement

- 2.1 This policy is intended to help employees and Councillors make appropriate decisions about the use of social media.
- 2.2 This policy covers all individuals working at all levels with the Council, including all elected and co-opted Councillors, volunteers, the Clerk and all other Council employees.



- 2.3 It outlines the standards the Council requires employees and members to observe when using social media, the circumstances in which your use of social media will be monitored and the action that will be taken in respect of breaches of this policy.

3. The scope of the policy

- 3.1 All employees and members are expected to comply with this policy at all times to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the Council.
- 3.2 Breach of this policy by employees may be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure and in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct.
- 3.3 Breach of this policy by members will be dealt with under the Local Resolutions Policy or in serious cases by the Code of Conduct.

4. Responsibility for implementation of the policy

- 4.1 The Council has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.
- 4.2 The Clerk is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for changes to minimise risks to our work.
- 4.3 All employees and members should ensure that they take the time to read and understand this policy.
- 4.4 Any breach of this policy should be reported to the Clerk (or the Chair of the Council if the breach is related to the Clerk).

5. Using social media sites in the name of the Council

- 5.1 Before using social media on any matter which might affect the interests of the Council you must have read and understood this policy.
- 5.2 The Council recognises the importance of social media 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 and members joining in and helping shape community conversation and direction through interaction in social media.
- 5.3 All communications from and to the Council's social media sites will meet the following criteria:
- Be civil, respectful and relevant
 - Not contain content that is unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive
 - Nor contain content copied from elsewhere for which it does not own the copyright



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- Not contain any personal information, other than necessary basic contact details
 - Will be moderated by the Clerk
 - Will not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising.
- 5.4 The Clerk is responsible for approving and arranging publication of content to the website, YouTube and Facebook pages.
- 5.5 The social media sites will be created and managed by the Clerk. No Councillor will have access to the page for administration purposes.
- 5.6 The social media account will be set up using the official Council's email addresses.
- 5.7 Only information regarding the Council should be entered as part of the biography. No religious or political views should be expressed under the biography.
- 5.8 There will always be a minimum of two members of staff linked to each account.
- 5.9 The Clerk and authorised staff are permitted to post material on a social media site in the name of the Council and on its behalf in accordance with the rules and scope of this policy.
- 5.10 Communication through social media will only be undertaken within business hours.
- 6. Facebook**
- 6.1 The aim is to use the Facebook page to interact in a stronger way with the community by providing timely information on Council services, advertising events and other projects of the Council.
- 6.2 Friends will not be allowed to post new topics to the wall – this will prevent others placing topics on games etc. to the Council's account for all to see. However, friends would be able to comment on wall topics created by the Council.
- 6.3 Posts on the page would be available for all users of Facebook to see.
- 6.4 The Council logo will be the profile picture for everyone to see.
- 6.5 Photo Albums will be open for everyone to view.
- 6.6 Photos uploaded to the album will not have direct view of any child's face without the prior consent of their guardian.
- 6.7 The page will be maintained by the Clerk who will remove messages from the wall which include:



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- Abusive language content
- Which may cause offence to a specific group of people e.g. comments on a person's sexuality, sexist comments, racial comments etc.
- Which contain potentially libellous comments

6.8 If any points raised on the wall are relevant and need to be discussed by the Council then if necessary further information will be sought before bringing it to the Council.

6.9 Event dates will be created for any Council event taking place.

6.10 People would be encouraged to 'follow/like' Chirk Town Council's page.

6.11 If friends are repeatedly abusing the Council's wall then they will be removed from the friends list and unable to post to the wall. Instances which would involve removal from the friends list include repeated:

- Posting with abusive language content
- Posting comments which may cause offence to a specific group of people e.g. comments of a person's sexuality, sexist comments, racial comments etc.
- Posting potential libellous comments

6.12 Private messages will only be sent in response to anyone sending an initial private message to the Council account. The response will ask the person to email the Council with the request for comment and the office email will be provided.

7. Website

7.1 The Council's website is an integral part of the Council. Its purpose is to communicate with residents, local clubs, societies and organisations as well as external bodies, Local and/or Central Government organisations.

7.2 The Council will aim to ensure that all information within the website is up to date and relevant.

7.3 The following items will be included:

- General information about the Council
- List of Councillors and member information
- Council agendas
- Council minutes
- Council Committee minutes
- Financial information
- Council policies and procedures
- Information on local groups/ organisations, businesses and events
- Links to the following external websites:
 - Wrexham County Borough Council



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- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
- Other items may be included at the Clerk's discretion, and any items for publication on the website should be emailed to the Clerk at info@chirktowncouncil.org.uk

7.4 The following will NOT be included:

- Articles affiliated to, or promoting any political organisation
- Commercial advertisements
- Publicity for any non-charitable fund-raising event

7.5 The Clerk and members will treat all information confidentially, securely and sensitively. Failure to observe this may be seen as a breach of the Council's code of Conduct and dealt with through its prescribed procedures.

8. YouTube

8.1 The aim is to use YouTube to share video content.

9. Acceptable use of social media

9.1 The rules are set down to ensure proper use of the Council's social media pages.

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

9.2 When making use of any social media platform, you must read and comply with its terms of use.

9.3 Do not upload, post or forward a link to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content.

9.4 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.

9.5 Do not upload, post or forward any content belonging to a third party unless you have that third party's consent.

9.6 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.

9.7 Be honest and open, but be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people's perceptions of the Council.

9.8 You are personally responsible for content you publish into social media.



9.9 Don't escalate heated discussions, be respectful and quote facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations.

9.10 Don't discuss individual colleagues or members without their prior approval.

9.11 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.

10. Monitoring use of social media websites

10.1 Employees and members should be aware that any use of social media websites (whether or not accessed for Council purposes) may be monitored and, where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken.

10.2 Misuse of social media sites can, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or otherwise give rise to legal liability against you and the Council.

10.3 In particular a serious case of uploading, posting, forwarding or posting a link to any of the following types of material on a social media website, whether in a professional or personal capacity, will probably amount to gross misconduct/breach of the Code of Conduct (this list is not exhaustive):

- a) pornographic material (that is, writing, pictures, films and video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature);
- b) a false and defamatory statement about any person or organisation;
- c) material which is offensive, obscene, criminal, discriminatory, derogatory or may cause embarrassment to the Council, Councillors or employees;
- d) confidential information about the Council or anyone else
- e) any other statement which is likely to create any liability (whether criminal or civil, whether for you or the organisation); or
- f) material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights, or which invades the privacy of any person.

Any such action will be addressed under the Disciplinary Procedure/Code of Conduct.

10.4 Where evidence of misuse is found the Council may undertake a more detailed investigation involving the examination and disclosure of monitoring records to those nominated to undertake the investigation and any witnesses or managers involved in the investigation. If necessary such information may be handed to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.

10.5 If you notice any use of social media by other employees/ members in breach of this policy please report it to the Clerk/Chair in accordance with the Council's Whistle Blowing Policy.



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10.6 Any employee/member who feels that they have been harassed or bullied, or are offended by material posted or uploaded by a colleague onto a social media site should inform the Clerk/Chair.

11. Monitoring and review of this policy

11.1 The Council shall be responsible for reviewing this policy annually to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.

11.2 The policy will be a living document and will be able to be altered by the Clerk to allow immediate action should the unexpected arise. This will be key to overcoming teething problems that have not already been identified. Changes to the policy will be highlighted at the next Council meeting to keep members abreast of the changes.

11.3 Further information for members is published by the Welsh Local Government Association, on the use of social media and can be viewed on the website:-
<https://www.wlga.wales/social-media-and-online-abuse>

12. Current social media sites

Facebook

- Chirk Town Council
- Chirk Parish Hall
- Chirk Community Agent
- Chirk Coronavirus Support
- Chirk Festive Lights
- Chirk Community Cupboard

Website: <https://www.chirk.info>

(note: new website address to be issued later in 2022)

You Tube – Chirk Town Council : <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCK8xB-dESpMvtEJfXYCK1g>