



# BODMIN TOWN COUNCIL

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Bodmin Town Council is committed to making the best use of all available technology and innovation to improve the way it communicates with the public. This includes using all reasonable and cost effective means to improve the way the Council communicates with the local community.

This policy includes guidelines on Councillor and Officer responsibilities when using such channels of communication and the policy applies equally to both Members and Officers.

Bodmin Town Council currently operates two websites, Bodmin Live (primarily based upon tourist information and local events) and the Town Council page.

The Council also manages two Facebook Accounts – Bodmin Information Centre and Bodmin Town Council.

### 2 Definition

- 2.1 'Social Media' is the term commonly given to all web based tools which allow users to interact with each other in the same way i.e. by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests online.
- 2.2 Social media involves any online communities or networks which encourage participation and engagement including email, online social forums, blogs or video/image sharing facilities such examples include Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, amongst thousands of others.

### 3 Aims

- 3.1 Although these platforms provide many new and exciting opportunities, it is important to manage any potential risks associated with Social Media.

These guidelines aim to provide both Members and Officers with information concerning the use of, or development of, any social media application in order to ensure that the maximum potential is achieved from these applications whilst maintaining a safe and professional approach.

- 3.2 It is important to remember that:

- In most cases the information shared is in the public domain and can be viewed by anyone in the world. With many applications you do not even need to register to view the content it may only be necessary to register if you wish to participate and publish to the site;
- It is easy to respond immediately to messages/comments due to the instant nature of this technology and this could lead to a situation being unintentionally inflamed.

### 4 Use of Social Media

- 4.1 The use of Social Media is recognised as an important part of how the Council and its Members communicate with the wider public including promoting the Council's activities, providing updates, news stories and sharing other useful information.

Members and Officers may wish to use their own computers and devices as well as the devices issued by the Council, however it is important to note that these guidelines apply regardless.

#### 4.2 Members and Officers must:

- Be aware that at all times whilst contributing to social media activities, you are representing the Council and therefore you are personally responsible for the content you publish to Social Media;
- Not publish content that is unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening or obscene in nature;
- Never publish or share personal details of others i.e. home addresses/telephone numbers unless given express consent to do so;
- Ensure that any personal or sensitive data is dealt with in line with the Council's Data Protection Policy;
- Always use a disclaimer and make it clear that what you say is representative of your personal views only, and not those of the Council i.e:  
*"Any views or opinions presented in this email are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of Bodmin Town Council."*; and
- Show consideration and respect to all and ensure that the use of Social Media is not damaging to the Council's reputation or credibility.

### 5 Excessive Use of Social Media at Work

- 5.1 Officers of BTC are permitted to make reasonable and appropriate use of social media from the Council's computers or devices for work purposes and during scheduled breaks; however they should not spend an excessive amount of time using social media sites.
- 5.2 The Council reserves the right to monitor the internet usage of all employees if it considers that an employee has been spending an excessive amount of time using social media for non-work related activity or if an employee has acted in a way which breaches these guidelines.

### 6 Disciplinary Action in relation to Social Media

- 6.1 All Members and Officers of the Council are required to adhere to these guidelines and should be aware that a breach of these guidelines could lead to action under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure. Serious breaches i.e. incidents of bullying a colleague via social media could constitute gross misconduct.

### 7 Links with Other Policies/Information

- 7.1 These guidelines aim to provide all Councillors and employees with information concerning the use of any social media application and to help them utilise the tools available, whilst maintaining a safe, professional approach at all times.
- 7.2 This policy links with the Council's E-mail & Internet Policy, Guidance to Members & Officers in respect of using Tablets/Electronic Devices for Meetings and GDPR Policy.

### 8 Review

- 8.1 Owing to the fast changing nature of information technology, particularly in relation to electronic communication, it is important that these guidelines be reviewed regularly (not less than annually) and amended as necessary based on changes to legislation or evidence taken forward.

### 9 Alternative Formats

- 9.1 The Equality Act 2010 – copies of this document in large print (A3 Format) or larger font size, or

recorded onto tape as a 'talking book' can be made available for those with sight impairment on request from the Council Office or by telephoning 01208 76616 or e-mailing [policy@bodmin.gov.uk](mailto:policy@bodmin.gov.uk)

9.2 The Council can also arrange to provide versions in other languages for staff whose first language is not English.

## 10 Freedom of Information

10.1 In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this Document will be posted on the Council's Website [www.bodmin.gov.uk](http://www.bodmin.gov.uk) and copies of this document will be available for inspection on deposit in the Council Office.

Document Name & Version:	Social Media Policy V1.3
Responsible Officer:	Executive Assistant
Date approved by Committee:	05.09.19
Date adopted by Council:	19.09.19