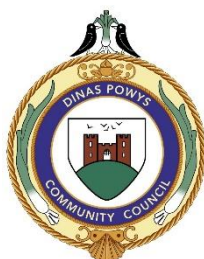


DINAS POWYS COMMUNITY COUNCIL



SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE

Date of adoption	Full Council – 18 September 2025
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Introduction:

A revolution is taking place in how we communicate. The world is experiencing the biggest ever change in how information is created and owned, as well as the speed in which it can be shared. This is changing the way we live, work and even how we speak and think.

Social media is a blanket term applied to a range of online multimedia tools that are used for creating content and two way communication. They can be accessed via your smartphone, PC, laptop, tablet, or smart TV. All social media accounts are free of charge and can be set up quickly and easily from an Internet page.

Aim:

To reduce the potential reputational and legal risks of social media use by ensuring that we manage our interactions on these public platforms in a controlled and appropriate manner.

1. These guidelines :

- 1.1. are intended to assist employees, elected and co-opted members make appropriate decisions when engaged in interactions via social media platforms, such as social networking websites, forums, message boards, blogs, or comments on web-articles, such as X, Facebook, and LinkedIn.
- 1.2. Outline circumstances under which an individual or group utilising social media may be monitored and potential action(s) that may be taken in respect of any breaches.

2. The scope of these guidelines for employees, elected and co-opted members:

Breaches in the use of social media shall be dealt with as follows: -

2.1. **Councillors:** under the Code of Conduct.

2.2 **Staff:** under our Disciplinary Procedure Policy

All employees, elected and co-opted members are advised to consult these guidelines at all times to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the Council and its functions.

3 Using social media sites in the name of the Council

3.1 All employees, elected and co-opted members are permitted to post material on a social media website in the name of the Council and on its behalf in accordance with the rules and scope covered by the Code of Conduct, supported by these guidelines.

3.2 If you are unsure if your comments are appropriate do not post them and consider seeking advice in advance. The main message is, remain vigilant when using social media.

4. Using social media

4.1 The Council recognises the importance of the internet in shaping public opinion and thinking about the Council and the support and services it provides to the community. It also recognises the importance of our employees and elected and co-opted members joining in and helping shape community conversation and direction through interaction in social media.

4.2 Before using social media on any matter which might affect the interests of the Council you must adhere to the Code of Conduct and read and understand its policy on the use of social media. This guidance is designed to help in your decision making about the use of social media.

5. Advice for the use of social media

Whenever you use social media in accordance with the Code of Conduct, you should adhere to the following general principles:

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

5.2 Any employee, elected or co-opted 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 website should inform the Clerk/Chair.

5.3 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 can discuss this with the Clerk/Chair.

- 5.4 Do not upload, post, or forward any content belonging to a third party unless you have that third party's consent.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 When making use of any social media platform, you must read and comply with its terms of use.
- 5.7 Be honest and open, but be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people's perceptions of the Council.
- 5.8 You are personally responsible for content you publish onto social media platforms.
- 5.9 Do not escalate heated discussions, try to be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations.
- 5.10 Do not discuss colleagues without their prior approval.
- 5.11 Do not share any of the Council's confidential or privileged information
- 5.12 Always consider others' privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory e.g. politics and religion. Remember that although it is acceptable to make political points or canvass votes via your own social media accounts this will not be permissible if you are commenting on behalf of the Council.
- 5.13 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.

6. Monitoring the use of social media websites

- 6.1 Employees and elected or co-opted 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 these guidelines are found, action may be taken against employees under our Disciplinary Procedure, and for councillors under the Code of Conduct.
- 6.2 Misuse of social media websites can, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or otherwise give rise to legal liability against you and the Council.
- 6.3 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 likely 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, our councillors or our employees;
 - d) confidential and privileged 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.

6.4 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 appropriate, such information may be handed to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.

6.5 If you notice any use of social media by other employees, elected or co-opted members, in breach of these guidelines, please report it to the Clerk/Chair *in accordance with the Whistle Blower Policy available through One Voice Wales* - <https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/StaffnetPlus/Speak-Out/Whistleblowing-Policy.pdf>.

7. Monitoring and review of these guidelines

7.1 The Council shall be responsible for reviewing these guidelines on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects best practice.

8. Roles & responsibilities

Social media account holders

Ensuring that anyone whose role requires them to post social media content on behalf of the organisation has completed relevant training on social media before engaging;

Understanding risks that are associated with the use of social media channels

Putting in place processes for content approval and for monitoring local social media activity;

Ensuring that any agencies we work with on social media are aware of this guidance

Reading and acknowledging the Social Media Standard

Further information for elected and co-opted members, published by the Welsh Local Government Association, on the use of social media, can be viewed on the One Voice Wales website:-

http://www.onevoicewales.org.uk/OVWeb/good_practicegeneral-8204.aspx

Do's

Think Before You Post – Consider the impact of your words and images before sharing.

Protect Your Privacy – Use strong passwords and update security settings to control who sees your content.

Engage Positively – Share helpful, respectful content and participate in meaningful discussions.

Verify Information – Before reposting news or claims, fact-check to avoid spreading misinformation. **Network Smartly** – Connect with professionals and groups that align with your goals.

Don'ts

Overshare Personal Information – Avoid posting sensitive details like home addresses, financial info, or travel plans.

Engage in Online Arguments – Heated debates rarely end well; keep interactions constructive.

Post When Emotional – Avoid sharing impulsive messages that could be regrettable later.

Ignore Cybersecurity Risks – Be cautious with unknown links, scams, and suspicious requests.

Disregard Your Digital Footprint – Anything posted online can resurface; think long-term before uploading content.