



HOLYWELL TOWN COUNCIL

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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1. PURPOSE

The Town Council have decided to utilise social media as a means of improving and enhancing communication with the Holywell community and external agencies. The social media platforms include but are not limited to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The following are some examples of how social media will be utilised:

- To post information about and promote forthcoming events, e.g. music festivals, Christmas lights switch on, etc.
- To post relevant information relating to the town, e.g. road closures, planning matters.
- To facilitate debate and consultation, e.g. community matters, community meetings.
- To signpost local residents and the wider public to relevant sources of information.
- To inform the public of the purpose and remit of the Town Council and the scope of its powers.
- Network with other organisations, e.g. Wales in Bloom, Flintshire County Council and other Town and Community Councils.
- Link to the Town Council website to obtain further information on the Council's activities.

2. POLICY GUIDELINES

The social media platforms should not be used as a means for complaining by the Town Council about other organisations or individuals.

The policy does not exist to gag councillors or prevent them expressing views. However, consideration must be given to any comments made which may be seen as politically sensitive, divisive or bringing the Town Council into disrepute. Any comments made must not be disrespectful or be seen as bullying. All comments made should focus on the issues and not individuals. In addition, councillors are asked to be mindful of:

- a) Personal privacy settings on their own social media pages.
- b) Comments made on personal social media pages.
- c) Considering adding a disclaimer to personal accounts that views expressed are their own, not that of the Town Council.

This policy will remain a working document and will be amended as required based on the experiences and activities which occur when administering the social media pages.

3. ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

The Following guidelines are for the administration and management of the social media pages.

1. The social media pages will be administered and managed by the Support Officer, in consultation with the Clerk.
2. The Support Officer will monitor the pages on a daily basis during the week.
3. Any activity on the pages which occurs over a weekend period will be considered on the first available working day.
4. The Council Offices and Communications Sub-Committee will consider in detail the activity on the pages once a quarter and report findings to the Full Council.
5. Individuals who choose to comment on the pages, the general public and councillors will all be treated equally.
6. The social media pages are primarily used as means of sharing information. The Council will only respond to comments as deemed appropriate and social media will not be used to enter into any longer term dialogue with any individual or group of individuals.
7. Any comments made on the pages which are perceived to be offensive and/or unacceptable will be removed and the individual advised via a personal message.
8. If the same individual has three comments deleted for being in breach of the guidelines, the Administrator will block the individual from all social media pages. The individual will be notified of the action and advised of the appeal process.
9. There will be two criteria when determining permanent blocking of an individual from the social media pages:
 - **Criteria One – Immediate Block** - Where a comment is deemed to be highly offensive, threatening or discriminatory or where an individual is pretending to be the Town Council.
 - **Criteria Two – Three strikes and out warning system** - Where a comment is deemed to be disrespectful, intimidating or politically sensitive.

4. APPEAL PROCESS

In the event of an individual being blocked from the Town Council's social media pages they will be notified via a personal message of the reason for the decision. They will also be notified how to appeal against the decision.

The individual will have a period of 28 days to appeal from the date of the original notification by the Administrator that they have been blocked from the site. The individual will be required to provide a written statement stating their argument for re-instatement to view and comment on the Town Council's social media pages.

The Council Offices and Communications Sub-Committee will consider the individuals appeal at the next available meeting following receipt of the appeal and inform the individual of the outcome in writing within 28 days of the meeting.

5. BLOCKING INDIVIDUALS

Blocking an individual limits them from viewing posts you share on your timeline. Most ties currently held with the individual blocked will be broken. Blocking is reciprocal, so you will not be able to undertake activities like starting a Facebook chat or send a message, or view posts on their timeline.

Removing a block will not restore the friend connection. If an individual is blocked a new friend request on Facebook will need to be sent to the individual to reinstate them.

6. GENERAL INFORMATION

The privacy settings will be set in accordance with the levels agreed by the Full Council and will be reviewed on regular basis.

The password will never be shared with anyone not authorised to administer the site.

All councillors and administrators of the site will not post and share personal information – especially information that could be used to identify or locate them offline, such as addresses and telephone numbers.

Any content that violates the Facebook Statement of Rights and Responsibilities will be reported to Facebook.

The Moderation Blocklist – This will be used to prevent keywords from appearing on the Town Council’s pages. When individuals include blacklisted keywords in a post or comment on the page, the content will be automatically marked as spam. The Profanity Blocklist will also be used which will block the most commonly reported words and phrases marked as offensive by the broader community.

All Holywell Town Council Policies are approved by full council and subject to an annual review.

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Town Mayor & Chairman of the Council