Peterston-super-Ely Community Council
Cyngor Cymuned a Llanbedr-y-Fro

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY 2026

Reviewed September 2026
Adopted 14.9.26 – Minute 09/17

Introduction

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.

1. Policy statement

1.1. This policy is intended to help employees and elected members make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as social networking websites, forums, message boards, blogs or comments on web-articles, such as X, Facebook and LinkedIn.
1.2. This policy outlines the standards the Council requires employees and elected 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.

2. The scope of the policy

2.1. All employees and elected members are expected to comply with this policy at all times to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the Council.
2.2. Breach of this policy by employees may be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.
2.3. The Members' Code of Conduct applies to online communications in the same way as it applies to written and verbal communications. Breach of this policy by elected members will be dealt with under the Code of Conduct.

3. Responsibility for implementation of the policy

3.1. The Council has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.
3.2. The Clerk is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for changes to minimise risks to our work.

3.3. All employees and elected members should ensure that they take the time to read and understand this policy. Any breach of this policy should be reported to the Clerk or Chair of the Council.
3.4. Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to the Clerk.

4. Using social media sites in the name of the council

4.1. The Clerk and elected members are permitted to post material on a social media platform in the name of the Council and on its behalf in accordance with the rules and scope of this policy.

Official Council social media may be used to:
promote Council and community events, consultations, vacancies and good-news stories;
share relevant information from public bodies, partner organisations and community groups; and
direct formal requests, complaints and statutory matters through the Council's established channels.

Social media supplements, but does not replace, the Council's formal methods of communication and decision-making.

The Council will designate the Clerk or another authorised person to moderate each official account. The moderator is responsible for publishing and monitoring content, keeping access credentials secure, and removing or hiding third-party content where reasonably necessary because it is unlawful, defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, confidential, irrelevant, repetitive or otherwise breaches the published rules of the page. Significant moderation decisions should be recorded and, where appropriate, reported to the Council.

5. Using social media

5.1. The Council recognises the importance of the internet 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 elected members joining in and helping shape community conversation and direction through interaction in social media.

a) Before using social media on any matter which might affect the interests of the Council you must have read and understood this policy.

6. Rules for use of social media

Whenever you are permitted to use social media in accordance with this policy, you must adhere to the following general rules:
6.1. Do not upload, post or forward a link to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content.

6.2. Any employee/elected member who feel 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.

6.3. 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 should discuss this with the Clerk/Chair.

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

6.5. 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.

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

6.7. Council communications must be accurate, objective, balanced and informative. Correct material errors promptly and make clear where information is provisional or subject to a Council decision.

6.8. Do not use a false identity or misleading account name in connection with Council business.

6.9. Do not present a personal opinion as the view of the Council or imply that you are authorised to speak for the Council when you are not.

6.10. Do not publish content on behalf of the Council that is contrary to a lawful decision of the Council. Personal criticism of a Council decision should not be published.

6.11. Do not identify or name another person in Council content without a lawful basis and, where consent is relied upon, their prior permission.

6.12. Do not publish photographs or videos of children or young people through a Council account without appropriate consent from a parent or guardian, unless another clear lawful basis applies. Avoid identifying a child unnecessarily and follow the Council's safeguarding and data-protection arrangements.

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

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

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

6.16. Don’t discuss colleagues without their prior approval.

6.17. 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.

6.18. 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.

7. Legal considerations and Council decision-making

Social media content may create legal liability for the author and the Council. Users must take particular care in relation to defamation, copyright and other intellectual property rights, confidentiality, data protection and privacy, contempt of court, harassment, discrimination, safeguarding, and obscene or otherwise unlawful material.

Before reusing text, images, audio or video, confirm that the Council owns the material, has permission to use it, or may lawfully use it under an applicable licence or exception. Any required attribution must be included.

Elected members should exercise particular care when commenting publicly on a matter that is due to be determined by the Council or one of its committees. A public statement that suggests a member has closed their mind may give rise to an allegation of pre-determination, apparent bias or a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct. Members should keep an open mind, consider all relevant information presented at the meeting, seek advice from the Clerk or Monitoring Officer where necessary, and declare any interest as required.

8. Monitoring use of social media platforms

8.1. Employees and elected members should be aware that any use of social media platforms (whether or not accessed for Council purposes) may be monitored and, where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken against employees under our Disciplinary Procedure and councillors under the Code of Conduct.

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

8.3. 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 platform, 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 our councillors or our 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.

8.4. 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.

8.5. If you notice any use of social media by other employees/elected members in breach of this policy, please report it to the Clerk/Chair.

9. Monitoring and review of this policy

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