

# Cyngor Cymuned LLANBEDROG Community Council

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

### **Introduction**

Social media is a term that applies to a range of online multimedia tools that are used for content creation and two-way communication. They can be used via mobile phone, computer, laptop, tablet or TV. All social media accounts are free and can be set up quickly and easily from any internet page.

### **1. Policy statement**

- a) This policy is intended to help employees and elected members make appropriate decisions regarding the use of social media such as social networking sites, forums, message boards, blogs or comments on websites.
- b) This policy outlines the standards that the Council requires employees and elected members to observe when using social media, the circumstances in which the use of social media will be monitored, and the steps taken in relation to a breach of this policy.

### **2. Policy obligations**

- a) 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.
- b) Breach of this policy by employees may be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure and, in serious cases, may be treated as serious misconduct leading to dismissal.
- c) Breaches of this policy by elected members are dealt with under the Members' Code of Conduct.

### **3. Policy implementation responsibility**

- a) The Council has overall responsibility for implementing this policy effectively.
- b) The Clerk is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of this policy and making recommendations for changes to reduce the risks to our work.
- c) All employees and elected members should ensure that they take the time to read and understand this policy. The Clerk or Chair of the Council should be notified if anyone breaches this policy.
- d) Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to the Clerk.

### **4. Using social media websites in the Council's name**

- a) The Clerk and elected members are entitled to post material on a social media website in the Council's name and on its behalf in accordance with the rules and scope of this policy.
- b) If you are not sure whether your comments are appropriate do not post them until you have checked with the Clerk / Chair.

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## **5. Using social media**

- a) The Council recognises the importance of the internet in shaping public opinion 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 them and helping to shape community conversation and direction through social media interaction.
- b) Before using social media on any matter that may affect the interests of the Council, you must read and understand this policy and employees must obtain prior written approval to do so from the Clerk.

## **6. Use of social media rules**

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

- a) Do not upload, post or send a link to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, abusive or defamatory.
- b) Any employee / elected member who feels that they have been harassed or bullied or offended by material that is posted or uploaded by a colleague on a social media website to notify the Clerk / Chair.
- c) Never disclose any commercially sensitive, private personal 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.
- d) Do not upload, submit or send any content belonging to a third party unless you have the permission of that third party.
- e) Before you include a link to a third-party website, check that any terms and conditions of that website allow you to link to it.
- f) When using any social media platform, you must read and comply with its terms of use.
- g) Be honest and open, and remember the impact your contribution could have on people's opinion of the Council.
- h) You are personally responsible for the content you publish to social media.
- i) Do not escalate heated discussions, try to be proportionate, respectful and cite facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations.
- j) Do not discuss colleagues without their prior approval.
- k) Always consider people's privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory e.g. politics and religion. Remember, although it is acceptable to make political points or vote from your own media account this will not be allowed if you are commenting on it on behalf of the Council.
- l) Avoid publishing your contact details where they can be accessed and used by people you did not intend to see, and never publish anyone else's contact details.

## **7. Monitoring use of social media websites**

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- a) Employees and elected members should be aware that any use of social media websites (whether they are used for Council purposes or not) may be monitored and, where a breach of this policy is found, action may be taken against employees under our 'Disciplinary Procedure and Advisers' under the Code of Conduct.
- b) Misuse of social media websites may, in some circumstances, be a criminal offense or otherwise cause legal liability against you and the Council.
- c) In particular, a serious instance of uploading, forwarding or posting to any of the following types of material on a social media website, whether in a professional or personal capacity, is likely to constitute serious misconduct / breach of Code of Conduct (this list is not exhaustive):
  - pornographic material (that is, writing, pictures, films and video clips of an explicit or sexually explicit nature),
  - a false and defamatory statement about any person or organisation,
  - material that is offensive, indecent, criminal, discriminatory, illegal or embarrassing to the Council, our councillors or our employees,
  - confidential information about the council or anyone else,
  - any other statement likely to create any liability (whether criminal or civil, whether to you or the organisation), or
  - material that infringes copyright or other intellectual property rights, or that breaches the privacy of any person.

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

- d) Where it is found that there is evidence of misuse, the Council may undertake a more detailed investigation relating to 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 will be given to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.
- e) If you notice any use of social media by employees / other elected members contrary to this policy, inform the Clerk / Chair in accordance with the Council's Whistleblower Policy.

## **8. Monitoring and review of this policy**

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

Date of review and adoption: 30 September 2024