CYNGOR CYMUNED GOETRE FAWR COMMUNITY COUNCIL

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

**Introduction**

Social media has become a powerful tool for Councils, helping them to engage with communities, raise awareness of community issues, events or Council initiatives and to seek views and receive feedback.

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.

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. However, before using social media on any matter which might affect the interests of the Council, you must have read and understood this policy.

1. **Policy statement**
	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’ (formally Twitter), Facebook and LinkedIn.
	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**
	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. 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.
	3. Breach of this policy by elected members will be dealt with under the Code of

Conduct.

1. **Responsibility for implementation of the policy**
	1. The Council has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.
	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. 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.
	4. Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to the Clerk.
2. **Using social media sites in the name of the council**
	1. Members are not permitted to post material on a social media website in the name of the Council unless authorised to do so by the Clerk, Chair or Communications Officer.
	2. If you are not sure about comments you wish to make as individual not on behalf of the Council do not post them until you have checked with the Clerk/Chair/ Communications Officer.

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**5. Rules for the 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:

* 1. Make all posts as factual as possible. Try to limit opinion or comment.
	2. Do not upload, post or forward a link to any abusive, obscene,

 discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content.

* 1. 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.

* 1. 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.

* 1. Do not up load, post or forward any content belonging to a third party unless

 you have that third party's consent.

* 1. 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.

* 1. When making use of any social media platform, you must read and comply

 with its terms of use.

* 1. Be honest and open, but be mindful of the impact your contribution might

 make to people’s perceptions of the Council.

* 1. You are personally responsible for content you publish into social media

 tools.
5.10 Don't escalate heated discussions, try to be conciliatory, respectful and

 quote facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations.

5.11 Don’t discuss colleagues without their prior approval.

 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.

1. **Monitoring use of social media websites**
	1. Employees and elected 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 this policy are found, action may be taken against employees under our Disciplinary Procedure and councillors under the Code of Conduct.
	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.
	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 probably amount to gross misconduct/breach of the Code of Conduct (this list is not exhaustive):
2. pornographic material (that is, writing, pictures, films and video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature);
3. a false and defamatory statement about any person or organisation;
4. material which is offensive, obscene, criminal, discriminatory, derogatory or may cause embarrassment to the Council our councillors or our employees;
5. confidential information about the Council or anyone else
6. any other statement which is likely to create any liability (whether criminal or civil, whether for you or the organisation); or
7. 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.

* 1. 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.
	2. 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 *in accordance with the Council’s Whilstle Blower Policy.*
1. **Monitoring and review of this policy**
	1. The Council shall be responsible for reviewing this policy annually to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.

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