



Fleetwood Town Council Social Media Policy

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

First Issue Date:	26//09/2017
Document Status:	Approved
Effective From:	26/09/2017
Scope of Document:	Social Media Policy
Objective:	To document the policy and expected conduct of Fleetwood town councilors and officers when engaging on Social Media platforms.
Author:	Media Working Group (D. Thornton, Cllrs. Anderton, Stirzaker and Raynor)
Authorised by:	Fleetwood Town Council
Review/Amendment dates:	Created 22nd August 2017 Review due September 2018

The Media Working Group were tasked with the development of a social media policy in line with national guidance and Fleetwood Town Councils current adopted Code of Conduct, part 1: General provisions and obligations.

On adoption of this policy by full council, all councillors and officers will be required to sign a copy to indicate they have read, understood and will comply with the policy requirements.

I confirm I have read and understand the above policy and checklist and will adhere to it as required by the councils code of conduct.

Signed:

Print name:

Date:

Conduct on Social Media platforms

Do:

- Be yourself, have your photograph on your profile page. Make it clear in which capacity you are posting in. Be honest.
- Be proactive and respond to specific queries from members of the public. If you don't know the answer, say you will find out, and consult with a fellow councillor or an officer.
- Apply the same standards of decency you would in a face to face conversation.
- Remember that professional and council standards apply online too. Defamation can apply online as well, so please think before you post.
- Remember that the council is a corporate entity and you are one of its representatives. Please post accordingly.
- Respect someone's privacy if they approach you with a sensitive matter on Social media.

Don't:

- Get involved in political posts or debates on official council pages, or where you are representing the Town Council online. Keep your political activities centred on the appropriate pages/sites.
- Use council social media pages or sites to advertise or promote a private business.
- Engage with trolls, they will drag you down to their level then beat you with experience.
- Be abusive. It doesn't work, it will make you look awful, and is a sure-fire way to land you in trouble with your electorate and the council. Be professional. Don't say anything you wouldn't be happy saying in a public meeting with the press there.
- Discuss specific casework/ward work. Case work can be reported to you on social media. Everything from uncollected rubbish and a cracked paving slab to concerns about child protection. As a good rule of thumb, ask residents to tell you the detail of an issue offline. Social media platforms usually have an easy-to-use way to talk one-to-one. Email and telephone can come into play too

Additional checklist for councillors and officers

You care about your area. You want to make a difference. Your time is precious. So how can you most effectively use social media as a councillor or officer?

Be a person

You are likely to be more effective if your personal social media profile is you (with a picture of you) rather than an organisation with a logo.

Don't worry about reaching everyone in your ward

Social media will be more effective in some wards than others. Urban areas with good broadband and mobile connections, and a working age population tend to respond best. Wards with an older population and poor internet connectivity tend not to be so engaged. However don't let this stop you as connections and coverage are continuously improving.

Don't let it replace your traditional work

To be an effective councillor you won't stop meeting people and posting leaflets simply because you are posting online. The traditional work of a councillor still has to be done. You will know your residents best—consider which channel works best for them to connect with you, online and offline.

Think about the platform you'll use

If people in your ward are keen Facebook users then think seriously about Facebook. Twitter is popular among councillors because it's easy to use and connects people really well. Whichever one you choose, learn one at a time before even thinking of trying something else. You will know your residents better than anyone else so ask them which channel works best for them.

See how other councillors use it

Watch and learn from other councillors/local authorities who are using social media. Have a chat to them.

Have a conversation

Social media works best as a two-way conversation connecting people and sharing information. Good councillors do this everyday face-to-face with residents—social media should be no different to this.

Don't wait for people to come to you

You've got your Facebook profile or your Twitter profile. People won't just come flocking to you. Run a search on your chosen profile for the name of your ward or an issue. Make a connection. Join a Facebook group set-up by residents. Comment on a blog, a website or a video clip.

Think about times when you won't post

From experience, many elected members say that Friday and Saturday nights are not always the best time to post, you won't always get the most rounded debates. Many councillors post sparingly on religious holidays.

Don't have a row

Robust debate is fine from time-to-time and it's part of the cut and thrust of local council work. Most people can accept that. But remember how this debate is playing out to passers-by who are not interested in the detail of the issue. They are likely to be switched off. Take the row offline with a phone call or an e-mail.

Pictures work

People respond really well to pictures, or even video. They don't have to be print quality. They don't have to be posed. If you are on a ward walk post some pictures. Include the people you are with if they are happy with that. Post pictures that show your human side too. That sunrise you just noticed. Your dog. Things that make you human.

Enjoy it

It's not meant to be scary. It's not meant to be hard work. Relax. Be yourself. Be a responsible elected member. Enjoy it.

For further information visit <http://www.local.gov.uk/social-media>