

# Taverham Village Hall Committee

## Social Media Policy

A comprehensive guide for social media use for Taverham Village Hall Committee channels and for individuals using social media in a personal capacity as a representative of the Taverham Village Hall Committee

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. Taverham Village Hall Committee will amend this policy, following consultations with the Chairman and/or Secretary where appropriate.

This policy is intended for all staff and volunteers of the charity; this includes employees, trustees and volunteers. Before engaging in social media activity, you must read this policy, which contains guidance that will help you adhere to our standards.

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## **Introduction**

### **What is social media?**

Social media is the collective term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create, share and interact with content (words, images, graphics and video content), as well as network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media platforms include Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Twitch and TikTok.

### **Why do we use social media and what can we use it for?**

Social media is essential to the success of communicating Taverham Village Hall's activities and availability. It is important for designated staff and volunteers to participate in social media to engage with our audiences and stakeholders, contribute to relevant conversations, and raise the profile of Taverham Village Hall, using the charity's corporate accounts. Some staff and volunteers may also support the charity's work using their personal accounts, and many will have social media accounts for personal use.

Building an engaged online community can lead to more significant long-term support and involvement from supporters. Social media can be a highly effective way for a charity to engage its audiences and communicate about its work.

### **Social media helps us to:**

- Promote our campaigns
- Share our news and updates with our audiences
- Celebrate our successes
- Raise awareness of important issues and challenges
- Advertise job and volunteering opportunities
- Support our fundraising activities
- Increase our hirers
- Build an online supportive community
- Raise our public profile and strengthen our reputation
- React to quickly changing situations and topics

### **Why do we need a social media policy?**

Social media is a fast-moving online world, where nuance and context can be easily lost. While social media brings the charity to a wide audience, it can also present risks. We want to ensure that all staff and volunteers using social media represent and reflect Taverham Village Hall Committee in the best way possible. It is also important to mitigate risks (such as reputational or legal issues) associated with the use of social media to protect our supporters, staff and volunteers, work and reputation.

While we encourage the use of social media to support our communications strategy or plans, we have important standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe and adhere to. The difference between a personal and professional opinion can also be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to Taverham Village Hall Committees work. Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations and is subject to the same laws as other kinds of publication or commentary in the public domain.

Failure to comply with this policy could expose Taverham Village Hall Committee to reputational damage as well as putting staff, volunteers, services users and members at risk.

### **Responsibilities and breach of policy**

Everyone is responsible for their compliance with this policy.

Participation in social media on behalf of Taverham Village Hall Committee is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect.

Breaches of policy or inappropriate behaviour may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Please refer to our Grievance & Disciplinary Policy for further information on our processes. Staff and volunteers who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach policies should seek advice from the Secretary.

### **Setting out the social media policy**

#### **Application**

This policy applies to all social media platforms used by staff (including consultants, and freelancers) and volunteers (including trustees) in a professional and personal capacity.

This policy also applies to online blogs, wikis, podcasts, forums, and messaging based apps, such as WhatsApp. Social media can be accessed in various ways, including from a desktop or laptop computer, tablet or smartphone. This policy applies to the use of all such devices.

#### **Internet access and monitoring usage**

There are currently no access restrictions to any of our social media sites in the Taverham Village Halls office. However, when using the internet at work, it is important that staff and volunteers refer to our Social Media Policy. You can refer to the same policy for guidance on working from home.

#### **Point of contact for social media and authority to post on Taverham Village Hall Committee social media accounts**

Our Secretary is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have questions about any aspect of these channels, please speak to the Secretary or the Chair. No other staff member or volunteer is permitted to post content on Taverham Village Hall Committee official channels without the permission of the Secretary or Chair.

#### **Which social media channels do we use?**

##### **The Taverham Village Hall Committee uses the following social media channels:**

Currently Facebook, however the Secretary/Chair will consider other channels if and when appropriate.

#### **Policy ownership**

The Secretary/Chair are responsible for authoring and updating this document. The policy once approved by the trustees will be reviewed by the Secretary annually, unless a significant change requires the organisation to check the policy before the next review date. All staff and volunteers will be notified of updates.

#### **Code of conduct**

- I will not insult, harass, bully or intimidate individuals or organisations

- I will respond to others' opinions respectfully and professionally
- I will not do anything that breaches my terms of employment/voluntary role
- I will acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly using provided guidance
- I will disclose conflicts of interest where I am able
- I will not knowingly post inaccurate information
- I will link to online references and original source materials directly
- I will be considerate, kind and fair
- I will always ensure my activity does no harm to the organisation or to others
- I will champion Taverham Village Hall Committee and its services

## **Using Taverham Village Hall Committees social media channels — appropriate conduct**

### **1. Know our social media guardians**

The Secretary is responsible for setting up and managing Taverham Village Hall Committee social media channels. The Secretary has overall ownership of these accounts and only those authorised to do so by the Secretary will have access to these accounts.

The Secretary/Chair will uphold best practices for channel security with secure passwords that regularly change. Never give out the passwords for our channels without express permission from the Secretary.

### **2. Be an ambassador for our brand**

Staff and volunteers must ensure they reflect Taverham Village Hall Committee values in what they post and use our tone of voice. Our brand guidelines provided in our Social Media Policy sets out our style that all staff and volunteers should refer to when posting content on Taverham Village Hall Committee social media channels. Please note only the Secretary is permitted to respond to comments on our social media posts on behalf of the organisation. All posts and comments should be attributed to the charity and not an individual. In special cases it may be appropriate for a staff member or volunteer to make an individual comment as themselves, but this should be under the supervision, and with the approval, of the Secretary/Chair.

### **3. Always pause and think before posting**

When posting from Taverham Village Hall Committee social media accounts, you must respond to comments in the voice of our charity and not allow your own personal opinions to influence responses. Staff and volunteers must not reveal their personal opinions via our accounts by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'reposting' as the Taverham Village Hall Committee, unless it is clear that you are doing so as an individual staff member or volunteer as part of an approach agreed with the Secretary (e.g. as part of a 'takeover' of the charity's account). If you are in doubt about the Taverham Village Hall Committees position on a particular issue, please speak to the Secretary.

### **4. Ensure brand consistency**

Staff or volunteers must not create or manage any other social media channels, groups or pages on behalf of the Taverham Village Hall Committee without express permission from the Secretary/Chair. This is to ensure brand consistency for users and the appropriate safeguarding and monitoring processes are in place.

### **5. Remember the bigger picture and focus on the benefit**

Staff and volunteers must make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for the Taverham Village Hall Committee to further our charitable purposes (either directly or indirectly,

by engaging stakeholders and building our brand using our strategy). All content must accurately reflect the Taverham Village Hall Committees agreed position as described in our Social Media Policy (copy available on our website).

## **6. Bring value to our audience(s)**

Those responsible for the management of our social media accounts should answer questions as swiftly as possible to help and engage with our service users and supporters.

## **7. Seek permission to share**

If staff or volunteers outside of the Taverham Village Hall Committee wish to contribute content for social media, whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, they should obtain guidance and permission from the Secretary/Chair.

## **8. Obtain consent**

Staff and volunteers must not post content about supporters, service users or partners without their, or their guardian's, express permission. If staff or and volunteers are sharing information about supporters, service users or third-party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from the Taverham Village Hall Committee. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, staff and volunteers must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.

## **9. Put safety first**

It can be challenging working on social media and there may be times where staff or volunteers could be subject to unpleasant or abusive comments directed at the charity, our work or people. We encourage everyone who is on social media on behalf of the charity to be aware of our safeguarding and wellbeing practices to deal with online abuse and consult with the Secretary/Chair where necessary.

It is also vital that the Taverham Village Hall Committee does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials in pursuit of social media engagement. For example, a video of a stunt or visiting an unsafe location.

## **10. Stick to the law**

Staff and volunteers must not encourage people to break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material.

## **11. Remain politically neutral**

Taverham Village Hall Committee is not associated with any political organisation or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We can express views where appropriate on policies that impact our work and service users, but it is essential that Taverham Village Hall Committee remains, and is seen to be, politically neutral.

We cannot endorse a political party or candidate. We must carefully manage the risk that we are perceived to have any party-political bias and should carefully consider any posts which might be perceived as such, for example, posts which talk about individual politicians or parties rather than policies.

## **12. Check facts and be honest**

Staff and volunteers should not automatically assume that material that's shared or included in any post is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification – for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it. But think first about how to manage any risk to the charity and its brand in doing so by consulting with the Secretary/Chair to craft the response.

## **13. Seek advice for complaints**

If a complaint is made on Taverham Village Hall Committee social media channels, staff and volunteers should seek advice from the Secretary/Chair before responding. If they are not available, then staff and volunteers should speak to the Treasurer.

## **14. Know what to do in a crisis**

Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the charity's reputation.

The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity or our people. The Secretary/Chair regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of the Taverham Village Hall Committee so we can catch any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis situation, the Secretary/Chair will do the following: produce a crisis management plan and include appropriate involvement of trustees and reference to Charity Commission serious incident reporting guidance.

If any staff or volunteers outside of the Secretary/Chair becomes aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on Taverham Village Hall Committee's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the Secretary/Chair immediately. It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to report complaints or comments that could escalate into a crisis or have serious implications for the charity. Only the Secretary/Chair is permitted to amend or delete content in a crisis.

## **15. Timings, schedules and rotas**

The Secretary will check social media and respond to comments and respond to comments at variable times Monday-Friday, 8am-7pm.

## **16. Use AI appropriately**

AI can be a valuable tool that can support our communications activities. However, staff and volunteers must ensure AI created content also adheres to our Social Media Policy. You must seek permission from the Secretary before using AI and only use approved AI tools and processes.

## **17. Handover ownership if your role changes**

You must hand over ownership of the group/page/account you manage to another appropriate staff member (or volunteer) if you change roles or if you leave the Taverham Village Hall Committee.

### **Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct**

Personal social media use by staff and volunteers can sometimes be attributed to the charity or bring other risks for the charity or individual staff or volunteers. This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which risks or conflicts might arise. Taverham Village Hall Committee staff and volunteers are expected to behave appropriately,

and in ways that are considerate of Taverham Village Hall Committees values and policies, both online and in real life.

### **1. Separate your personal views**

Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive the Taverham Village Hall Committee. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the Taverham Village Hall Committee. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about Taverham Village Hall Committees work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "Views are my own" or "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent Taverham Village Hall Committee positions, policies or opinions."

### **2. Take care when publishing personal views (particularly trustees and senior staff)**

Those in senior management including trustees and public-facing or specialist roles where they are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing Taverham Village Hall Committees view.

### **3. Discuss risks and conflicts of interest**

Staff and trustees who have a personal blog, social media profile or website which indicates in any way that they work on the Taverham Village Hall Committee should discuss any potential risk or conflicts of interest with the Secretary/Chair. Similarly, staff or trustees who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for the Taverham Village Hall Committee should discuss any potential risk or conflicts of interest with the Secretary/Chair.

### **4. Protect your personal reputation**

Think about your personal reputation as well as the charity's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be the first to correct your own mistakes.

Remember that if you have a public profile with the charity, your personal social media accounts could be looked at by critics of the charity, and bear this in mind when posting.

### **5. Use your common sense and good judgement**

Be aware of your association with the Taverham Village Hall Committee and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the general public, and colleagues.

### **6. Don't approach VIPs directly**

Taverham Village Hall Committee works with several high-profile organisations and individuals, including major donors. Please don't approach high profile people or organisations from your personal social media accounts to ask them to support the charity, as this could hinder any potential relationships that are being managed by the Secretary/Chair/Vice Chair/Treasurer. This includes asking for reposts about the charity.

If you have any information about high profile people or organisations that have a connection to our cause, or if there is someone who you would like to support the charity, please speak to the Secretary/Chair/Vice Chair to share the details.

## **7. Refer press enquiries**

If a staff member or volunteer is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to Taverham Village Hall Committee, they should talk to the Secretary/Chair immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.

## **8. Keep your political activity separate from the charity**

When representing Taverham Village Hall Committee, staff and volunteers are expected to uphold Taverham Village Hall Committees positioning. Staff and volunteers who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from the Taverham Village Hall Committee and understand and avoid potential risks and conflicts of interest. Staff should also inform the Secretary about any such political activity, and trustees should inform the Chair. As set out in point two above, senior staff and trustees should take particular care.

## **9. Protect your privacy**

Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. Remember that a simple 'like' can draw attention to your personal accounts. What you publish is widely accessible and could be around for a long time, so do consider the content, and your privacy, carefully.

All staff and volunteers who wish to engage with any of Taverham Village Hall Committees social media platforms are strongly advised to ensure that they set the privacy levels of their personal sites as strictly as they can and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. All staff and volunteers should keep their passwords confidential and change them often. In their own interests, staff and volunteers should be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social networking sites, such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers.

## **10. Help us to raise our profile (where appropriate)**

We encourage staff and volunteers to share posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support Taverham Village Hall Committee and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy (and taking into consideration the information above), we encourage staff and volunteers to do this as it helps users connect to us and raises our profile.

However, please take care to think about the reputation of the charity. If your personal social media account is not professional or otherwise appropriate for our audiences, please do not use it to amplify or promote the charity, as to do so brings risks both to you personally and to the charity. Similarly, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the Secretary who will respond as appropriate.

## **11. Avoid logos or trademarks**

Never use Taverham Village Hall Committee logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos must be requested from the Secretary and any content created must adhere to our brand guidelines. If permission is granted, content must be approved by the Secretary & Chair before publishing.

## **12. Staying safe online**

It can be challenging working on social media and there may be times where staff and volunteers could be subject to unpleasant or abusive comments directed at the charity, our work or people. We encourage everyone who is on social media to be aware of our safeguarding and wellbeing practices to deal with online abuse and consult with the Secretary/Chair/Vice Chair where necessary.

Staff and volunteers should be vigilant regarding suspicious content or links and must not reveal personal, confidential or sensitive information about themselves, other staff members, volunteers or supporters of the Taverham Village Hall Committee. Staff and volunteers should be wary of fake accounts that may claim to be Taverham Village Hall Committee members and should immediately notify the Secretary/Chair.

Care must also be taken to ensure that any links to external sites from our social media accounts are appropriate and safe. For more information, please see our Privacy & Data Protection Policy.

**Further guidelines:** using social media in a professional and personal capacity

### **Defamation**

Defamation is when a false statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published in print (such as in media publications) or online (such as Instagram Story, Facebook Live, Snapchat post). Whether staff or volunteers are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring the Taverham Village Hall Committee into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

### **Copyright law**

It is critical that all staff or volunteers abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, when representing the charity. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

### **Confidentiality**

Any communications that staff and volunteers make must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that the Taverham Village Hall Committee is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date, or information from people who the charity has worked with which is private.

### **Discrimination and harassment**

Staff and volunteers should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official Taverham Village Hall Committee social media channel or a personal account. For example:

- Making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief.
- Using social media to bully another individual.
- Posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content.

### **Accessibility**

In line with Taverham Village Hall Committee equity, diversity and inclusion policy, please refer to our Equal Opportunities Policy, we endeavour to ensure our social media is as accessible as possible. This includes using plain English, accessible fonts and avoiding small text sizes.

### **Use of social media in the recruitment process**

Recruitment advertising of vacancies should be done through the Secretary/Chair and promoted through approved channels.

There should be no systematic or routine checking of candidates' online social media activities during the recruitment process, as conducting these searches might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics, such as religious beliefs or sexual orientation, played a part in a recruitment decision. This is in line with Taverham Village Hall Committees Equal Opportunities Policy.

### **Use of social media to support fundraising activities**

Our social media platforms play a key role in our fundraising efforts and engaging with our donors. Before using our social media channels for fundraising purposes, staff and volunteers should read our fundraising policy.

### **Protection and intervention**

The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. For example, Facebook. However, if a staff member or volunteer considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the Secretary/Chair/Vice Chair immediately.

### **Under 18s and vulnerable people**

Young and vulnerable people face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming or radicalisation. Where known, when communicating with vulnerable or young people under 18-years-old via social media, staff and volunteers should ensure the online relationship with the Taverham Village Hall Committee follows the same rules as offline.

Staff and volunteers should be aware that children under the age of 13 should not be encouraged to create their own personal social media accounts or engage with others and are not legally allowed to use social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram or X.

Staff and volunteers should ensure that vulnerable and young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online and given guidance on security and privacy settings as necessary. Staff and volunteers should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the vulnerable or young person and Taverham Village Hall Committee content and other content is appropriate for them.

All staff members and volunteers have a responsibility to do everything possible to ensure that vulnerable and young people are kept safe from harm. If you come across anything online that could mean someone is at risk, you should contact the Secretary/Chair/Vice Chair immediately.