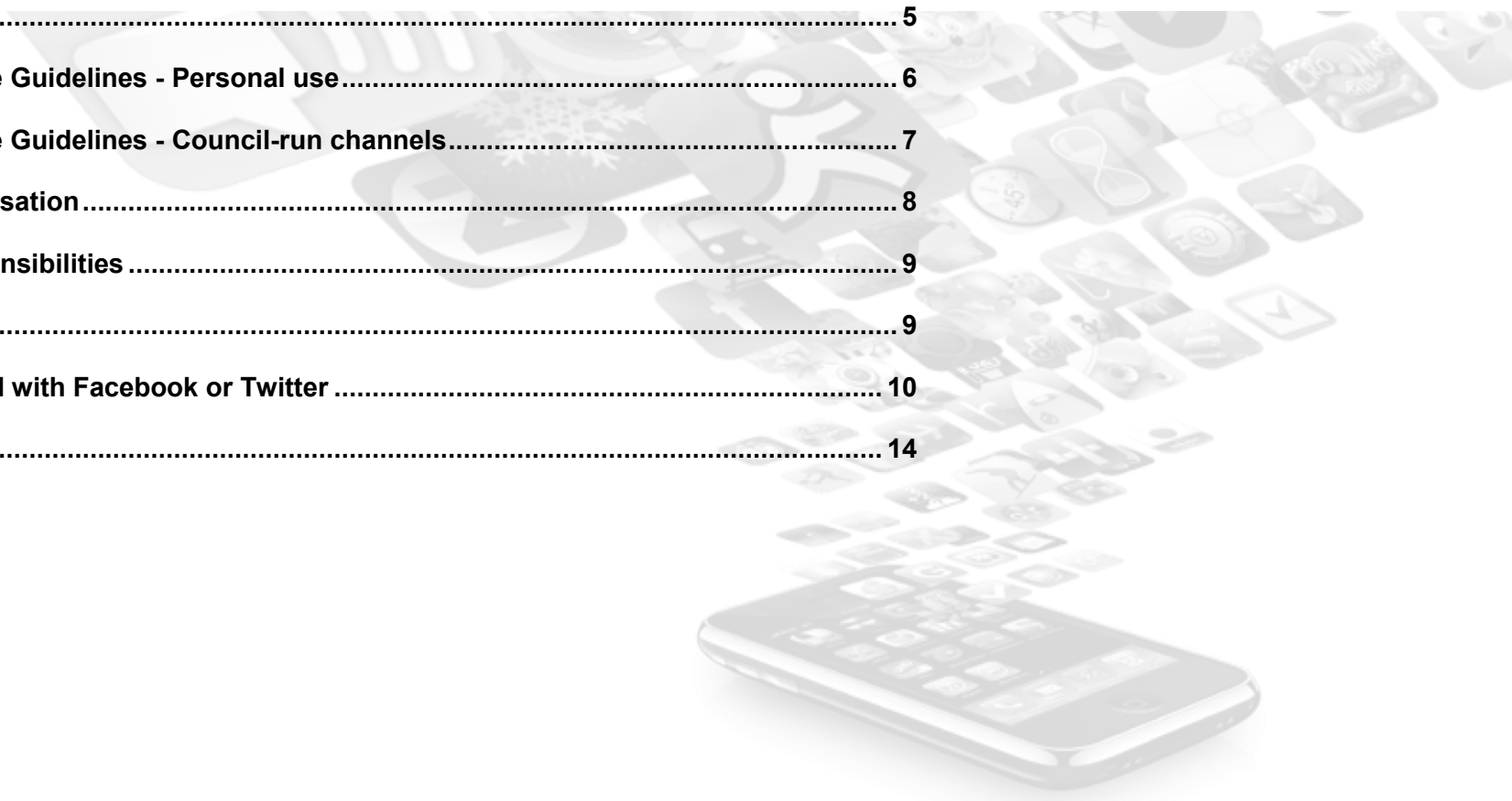


Social Media Guidelines



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Introduction

Social media is the term commonly given to websites and online tools (such as Facebook and Twitter) which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks, encouraging participation and engagement.

The use of social media presents exciting opportunities for the Council to have conversations with the wider community in order to share news, provide information on services, and seek opinions from our residents and service users. Alongside these opportunities it must be recognised that there are risks attached to the use of social media. Distribution of material cannot be controlled. Once posted to an initial target audience, material can be posted anywhere through the networks of each individual in that audience and beyond. It is therefore important that users of social media understand the pitfalls as well as the benefits of the technology.

Tendring District Council (TDC) has a corporate Twitter account with over 4,000 followers, enabling immediate responses to enquiries received in this way and providing two-way communication. Recent tweets are featured on the home pages of Ping! and the TDC website.

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a dark blue rectangular background.The YouTube logo, featuring the word "You" in black and "Tube" in white inside a red rounded rectangle.The Digg logo, featuring the word "digg" in a blue, stylized, outlined font.The Twitter logo, featuring the word "twitter" in a light blue, rounded, lowercase font with a white outline.The Foursquare logo, featuring the word "foursquare" in a blue, rounded, lowercase font with a white outline.The Flickr logo, featuring the word "flickr" in a blue, lowercase font with a pink "r" and a trademark symbol.The WordPress logo, featuring a circular icon with a white "W" on a dark background, with the word "WORDPRESS" in blue, uppercase letters below it.The LinkedIn logo, featuring the word "Linked" in black and "in" in white inside a blue square.

Introduction (continued)

There are a number of Facebook pages for various Council services in operation, to give up to date information on events and services we provide. For example, the Leisure Centre Facebook Pages are used to inform customers of class and timetable changes and receive feedback from them. The Princes Theatre Facebook group has over 2,500 friends and has become an invaluable tool for raising awareness of various events and shows the theatre hosts to large numbers instantaneously. This provides an excellent communication portal for customers to express opinions as well as ask questions.

TDC is committed to improving the quality and interest of the posts and timeliness of updating through these channels of communication, which will in turn lead to messages being spread by word of mouth and to get a two-way dialogue developing. This will help us to understand who is interacting with us and what they are interested in. This knowledge can then help us to develop and market our products such as leisure facilities, theatre productions and business help, and to engage with a wider customer base.

Social media channels are an important vehicle for the Council to connect with a wider range of groups such as young people who are expert web users, or those who may be dissatisfied with the Council and want to register a complaint.

There are specific safeguarding issues that employees who work closely with children or vulnerable adults need to be aware of. Any employee with concerns regarding these service users should seek further advice from their line manager, both for the protection of their service users and themselves.

These guidelines have been introduced to ensure appropriate, legal and effective use of Facebook and Twitter as communication channels for Tendring District Council.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Council's IT monitoring, IT security, Internet and e-mail policies and the Corporate Communications Strategy.



Aim of these Guidelines

- To provide guidance to our staff on the use of social media in relation to the Council.
- To ensure that any Council communication through social media meets legal requirements and is consistent with other communication activities.
- To ensure that all the Council's social media sites are easily identifiable as originating from the Council and correctly apply the Council's logo and brand guidelines.
- To protect the reputation of the Council while embracing the possibilities of social media as a communication channel.
- To prevent the unauthorised use of Council branding on employees' personal social media sites.
- To ensure that any personal use of social media on TDC equipment is confined to outside normal working hours in line with the approved internet policy.

Principles

These principles apply to your online participation and set out the standards of behaviour expected as an employee of the Council. Remember - you should participate in the same way as you would with other media or public forums.

- ✓ **Be professional** - remember that you are an ambassador for the Council.
- ✓ **Be responsible** - be honest at all times and when you gain insight; share it with others where appropriate.
- ✓ **Be credible** - be accurate, fair, and thorough and make sure you are doing the right thing.

Always remember that participation online results in your comments being permanently available and open to being republished in other media. Never give out personal details like home address and phone numbers. Also be aware that you may attract media interest in you as an individual, so proceed with care whether you are participating in a business or a personal capacity. If you have any doubts, take advice from your line manager or Communications representative. Stay within the legal framework and be aware that libel, defamation, copyright and data protection laws apply.

Applying these Guidelines - Personal Use

In accordance with the Council's IT policies staff are able to use Council equipment to access the internet outside normal working hours. This policy also applies to the use of social media.

As an employee you must take the following into consideration when accessing social media:

- Do not engage in activities on the internet that might bring the Council into disrepute.
- Do not allow your online activities to interfere with your day job. Unless you are using social media to directly support you in your work you should only access sites outside of your normal working hours.
- Do not use the Council logo on personal web pages.
- Do be aware of your association with the Council. If you identify yourself as a TDC employee, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with colleagues and customers.
- Do not reveal information which is confidential to the Council.
- Do not publish comments on your work or services offered by the Council on any personal account.
- Do not make any offensive or derogatory remarks about the Council, Councillors or other members of staff as this could amount to cyber-bullying or defamation and could result in disciplinary action.



Applying these Guidelines - Council-run Channels

Staff wishing to use social media as a channel for a project or campaign must first discuss and agree this with their Head of Department/ Corporate Director to ensure that there is a clear purpose and content is suitable for the target audience.

- Social media channels featuring the Council's logo or branding must comply with branding guidelines.
- The use of the Council logo or branding on social media channels must be authorised prior to publication by the Communications & Public Relations Manager (Nigel Brown).
- If you come across a group using the Tendring brand and/or Logo which you know not to be run by the Council, please contact the Communications & Public Relations Manager.
- Contact details or photos of service users or staff should not be included without first obtaining their permission.
- Individual employees can post items on Council sites providing it complies with the Guidance provided to all staff, and that they have been given the relevant authority to do so by their line manager / Head of Department / Corporate Director.
- Individual employees are personally responsible for the content they publish on blogs, wikis or any other form of social media.
- Copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws must be complied with at all times.
- Do not reveal information which is confidential to the Council - consult your line manager if you are unsure.

Please ensure that you comply fully with this Guidance at all times whilst using any forms of Social Media whilst carrying out your work.

If you have any queries please contact your line manager, departmental Communications Representative or Head of Department/Corporate Director.

Failure to maintain high standards will result in the channel being removed.

Officer Authorisation

Function-specific Social Media accounts and profiles must be agreed by the relevant Head of Department/Corporate Director prior to being set up, to ensure that they can be properly resourced and managed. A Senior Manager appropriate to the function will act as “responsible officer” for each account, and will be required to monitor content and use of the account and to identify the officers to be authorised to post / tweet.

Current Twitter accounts in use within Tendring District Council are:

Accounts	Twitter Handle	Responsible Officer	Admins
Corporate	@Tendring_DC	Lizzie Ridout	Lizzie Ridout Matt Cattermole James Mealing
Princes Theatre	@PrincesTheatre	Kai Aberdeen Melissa Diplock	
TDC Leisure Centres	@CentresTDC	Mike Carran	
Clacton Air Show	@ClactonAirShow	Sarah Daniells	Jo Needham
Love Clacton	@LoveClacton	Mike Carran	Sarah Daniells Jessica Wood
Seafronts	@TDCSeafronts	Nikki Nepean	Holly Gwillam Briony Faulkner
Recycling	@TendringRecycle	Jonathan Hamlet	April Dale
Cycle Tendring	@CycleTendring	Mike Carran	Jessica Wood
Careline	@Tend_Careline	Claire Ellington	Claire Ellington

Authorised staff are provided with this guidance document to ensure the integrity of the Council is upheld at all times. They are required to sign to confirm that they adhere to this Guidance.



Getting Started with Facebook



Before you create a Facebook Account there are a few things to think about and take note of:

- What you would like the page to be called, and what information will you want to include?
- Think about what you would like the end part of your web address to be after **http//** - for example <http://www.facebook.com/<whatyouwanthere>>.
- You can post links, photographs and videos to your page, the same as on your personal wall. This is not your personal wall. Do ensure that everything you post is appropriate.
- Don't ask your PC to remember your username and password when you first log in. It is too easy to forget who you are logged in as and accidentally post an inappropriate 'funny' video to the wrong place.
- You can, for example, delete a photograph you've posted in the wrong place. However, the way Facebook works means that your photograph will already have been posted into the Facebook news feed of everyone following your page. They may have already seen it before you delete it. Assume, therefore, that nothing can be deleted.
- You are still a representative of the Council when posting information, photographs etc. on our Facebook pages. Spellcheck your posts and check them for grammar. Never use text speak. Do not replace letters with numbers. Do not drop random E's or O's.
- If you wish to promote your new page by linking to it on other Council pages please contact your departmental or the corporate Website editors who will assist you with this. It is not appropriate to do this more than once a week, nor if your last link is still the last thing on the wall. You will annoy people and destroy any goodwill built up.
- Remember your audience. The tone of your words will help specific people understand your point.
- Never write anything on Facebook which you would not say to someone's face.
- Do not get into an argument on Facebook. If you feel a situation is descending into confrontation, ask the poster to use more private means of communicating with your departmental area such as telephone or email.

Getting Started with Facebook (continued)

- If someone is abusive, racist, sexist or in any other way inappropriate, please contact your line manager or a member of the Communications Group for advice. If necessary, we will report the person for inappropriate behaviour for you.
- Be aware that the people you are communicating with might have literacy issues, be dyslexic or not have English as their first language. Do always be patient.
- If you are ever unsure of how to deal with a situation on Facebook, please contact your line manager or a member of the Communications Group.

Getting Started with Twitter



Before you create a Twitter Account there are a few things to think about and take note of:

- When setting up a Twitter account for the first time, you will be asked to choose a username. Choose wisely, you cannot change your mind. The longer the username, the fewer letters you can type into the Twitter update box, which means less space to tell people about your event.
- You can delete a tweet but there is no guarantee no one will have seen it in the time it takes you to delete it. Just because it doesn't exist any more doesn't mean there might not be a PR fallout because of it.
- It is unlikely that you will be able to monitor your Twitter account 24/7 – please ensure you say so in your bio.
- If someone asks you to comment on any news stories, please refer them to our Communications and PR Manager.
- Never use text speak. Do not replace words with numbers and do not randomly drop an E or an O. Even on Twitter we are communicating on behalf of Tendring District Council and will be judged as such.
- If you pass details of your account to someone else if you are on leave, ensure that person has used Twitter before, that they have understood these guidelines and that their written communication skills are up to it. It is better to have no updates than ones which misrepresent the Council.

Getting Started with Twitter (continued)

- Don't get into a fight on Twitter. If the tone of a discussion is going downwards, take it off Twitter and onto a more appropriate communication channel such as email or telephone.
- Be aware of other people wanting to re-tweet (pass on) your tweets. If you're posting about an event, keep it concise. You have 140 letters to play with, minus your username, the @ before it and the RT: which stands for re-tweet and which Twitter automatically inserts. Spaces count towards your limit of 140 letters per update.
- If you want to re-tweet someone else's tweets, this is fine, but if the original message goes over 140 letters and you need to change it, don't change the thrust of the message.
- If you can't edit the message to make sense and you want to pass a link on, it's fine to post the link in a new update and put via <username> where username is the person who originally brought the link to your attention.
- If someone is asking for information, pointing them to a link which explains in detail is fine. Not everything can be answered in 140 letters.
- If you are tweeting from a public meeting, always be impartial. You are an observer when tweeting information on, not a participant.
- If you have committed to tweeting from a public meeting and are unable to due to reception issues, contact someone outside the meeting to post your apologies for you.
- Don't 'spam' people. In other words, don't send 6 updates in quick succession when you can fit your message into 1. The 6 updates won't appear in other people's streams in succession, instead they'll make no sense as other peoples updates appear in between yours.
- Don't butt into other people's conversations unless you've spoken to at least one of the participants before. If you have something really important to say, send a Direct Message.
- Don't post too many updates per day. If you have a lot to say, consider whether Twitter is the best communication channel to say it with.



Getting Started with Twitter (continued)

- Don't send a batch of updates every morning and then say nothing again all day. People are likely to ignore 6 tweets from the same account all at once, assuming it's just 'spam'. If you have a lot of short messages regarding different events, for example, consider using *Tweetdeck*^a or something similar to send pre-typed updates at certain times of day.
- Never ever write anything in reply to someone you wouldn't say to their face.
- Engaging with people is encouraged. Spending hours trying to placate the same person is not. If someone is persistently either complaining or asking questions, Twitter is not the best communication channel to use. Ask them to either telephone or write to the relevant point of contact in your service area.
- People will talk back to you. If you are comfortable answering their questions or dealing with their complaints, then it is fine for you to do so. If you are not, refer them to the usual point of contact for complaints in your service area.
- Be aware that the people you are communicating with might have literacy issues, be dyslexic or not have English as their first language. Try to be patient.
- People will sometimes be rude. You do not have to interact with anyone making racist or sexist remarks or those being abusive. There is a *Block*^b function on Twitter, use it, and make a quick record of the date and circumstances, just in case.
- If you are ever unsure of how to respond to a tweet, contact the Communications team who will be happy to advise you.

^a *Tweetdeck* is an application which runs from your PC which allows you to read your tweets, instead of using <http://www.twitter.com> – for more information see <http://www.tweetdeck.com> or contact the Communications Team.

^b The *Block* feature is built in to *Tweetdeck* – hover over the user's icon, left click the icon in the bottom right hand corner (a cog), select *User* and then click on *Block* in the menu which appears. At <http://www.twitter.com> enter the users name as <http://www.twitter.com/<user>> and select *Block* from there.

Contacts



Website Editors	Tel	Website Editors	Tel
Lisa Leggett	6507	Sharon Harwood-Bee	6596
Lizzie Ridout	6340	Sarah Creelman	6133
Katie Wilkins	6315	Wendy Townsend	6764
Sam Harding	6940	Antony Read	6162
Lauren Gifford	6457	Charlotte Hurrell	6516
Lauren Cuthbert	6309	Eve Ramsden	6129
Matt Cattermole	6552	Sianie Biswell	6342
James Mealing	6335	Emma Norton	6490
Michael Pingram	6585	Lynn Lee	6651
Sophie Hickson	6007	Sharon Martin	6698
Ashley Wood	6583	Tommy Draper	6494
Sam Wright	6249	Gill Hall	6778
Vicky Harrington	6327	Michelle Gordon	6376
Janey Nice	6572	Sally Leonard	6701
Yana Humphreys	6664	Shelley Correia-Bird	6130

Communication Group Members	Tel
Nigel Brown	6338
Lizzie Ridout	6340
Katie Wilkins	6315
Lisa Leggett	6507
Sam Wright	6249
Sally Cornish	6012
Matt Cattermole	6552
Emma Norton	6490
Sharon Harwood-Bee	6596
Charlie Fripp	6140
Shelley Correia-Bird	6130
Nikki Nepean	6984