



# KILLAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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### **Social Media Policy**

#### **1. Purpose**

This policy sets out how Killay Community Council uses and manages social media. Its purpose is to ensure that the Council communicates with residents effectively, transparently and respectfully while protecting the Council, its members, employees, volunteers and the wider community.

The policy applies to official Council social media accounts and to councillors and officers when they are communicating in an official capacity on behalf of the Council.

#### **2. Official Council Accounts**

Killay Community Council currently operates a Facebook and an Instagram account and has a website.

In future the Council may operate accounts on platforms such as X, LinkedIn, Nextdoor or other appropriate services.

Official accounts will be used to:

- Share Council news, decisions, notices and announcements.
- Promote Council meetings, consultations and community events.
- Provide information about local services, facilities and activities.
- Encourage residents to participate in consultations and community initiatives.
- Signpost residents to reliable sources of information.
- Celebrate local achievements and community activities where appropriate.
- Respond to reasonable enquiries and provide signposting where the Council can assist.
- Promote and explain the role of the community council.

Official accounts will not normally be used to conduct formal Council business where another established communication channel is required.

#### **3. Accuracy and Impartiality**

Information published through official Council accounts should be accurate, timely and capable of being substantiated.

The Council will correct significant factual errors as soon as reasonably practicable. Where appropriate, corrections will clearly identify what has been corrected.

Social media must not be used to promote the personal political views, interests or campaigns of individual councillors under the Council's name.

During elections and periods of heightened political sensitivity, the Council will take particular care to ensure that its communications remain factual, impartial and consistent with its legal and governance obligations.

#### **4. Councillors and Personal Accounts**

Councillors are entitled to express their personal views through their own social media accounts, subject to applicable law and relevant Council codes, policies and standards of conduct.

Please see the Code of Conduct published on our website.

Councillors should make clear when they are expressing a personal opinion rather than speaking on behalf of the Council.

In particular, Councillors must not:

- Present personal opinions as official Council statements.
- Disclose confidential or exempt Council information.
- Publish personal information about residents, staff or other individuals without a lawful basis.
- Use Council resources or accounts for personal political campaigning.
- Make statements that could reasonably be understood to commit the Council to a course of action when no such authority exists.

Councillors should also consider the permanence and public nature of social media before publishing comments about residents, colleagues, Council decisions or other councillors.

#### **5. Moderation and Acceptable Use**

The Council welcomes constructive discussion and legitimate criticism.

Comments or messages may be removed, hidden or otherwise moderated where they:

- Contain unlawful, threatening, abusive or discriminatory material.
- Contain harassment or personal attacks.
- Include hate speech or material targeting individuals or groups because of protected characteristics.
- Reveal confidential, sensitive or personal information.

- Impersonate another person or organisation.
- Are defamatory or potentially unlawful.
- Contain spam, scams, malicious links or repeated commercial advertising.
- Are deliberately disruptive or repeatedly unrelated to the subject being discussed.
- Include graphic or otherwise inappropriate material.
- Breach the rules or terms of the social media platform.

The Council will not remove comments simply because they are critical of the Council, councillors, staff or Council decisions.

Where possible, moderation decisions will be proportionate and consistent. The Council may retain a record of removed content where necessary for governance, legal, safeguarding or complaint-handling purposes.

## **6. Complaints and Enquiries**

Social media should not normally be used as the formal route for submitting complaints, Freedom of Information requests, subject access requests or other matters requiring a formal process.

Where a resident raises such a matter through social media, the Council should provide appropriate information about how to use the formal procedure.

Staff and councillors should avoid discussing individual complaints or disputes publicly.

## **7. Personal Information and Privacy**

Killay Community Council will take reasonable steps to protect personal information shared through its social media channels.

Residents should be discouraged from posting personal information publicly, including:

- Home addresses.
- Telephone numbers.
- Email addresses.
- Financial information.
- Information relating to children or vulnerable people.
- Information about individual complaints or disputes.

Personal information received through social media will be handled in line with the applicable privacy, data protection and information governance requirements. See Standing Order 21

## **8. Accessibility and Equality**

The Council will aim to make its social media communications accessible to as many people as reasonably practicable.

Where appropriate, the Council should:

- Use clear and straightforward language.
- Add alternative text to images where the platform allows.
- Caption videos where practicable.
- Avoid unnecessary use of text embedded only within images.
- Provide information through alternative formats or communication channels where reasonably requested.

The Council will seek to communicate in a way that respects the diversity of the local community.

## **9. Use of the Welsh Language**

Community councils are not subject to the Welsh language standards deriving from the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, but ‘they are expected to uphold the main principle of the Measure and treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English’.

Where practical, we should aim to publish bilingual posters, advertisements and headings on our website and social media pages. For more information see our Welsh Language Policy.

## **10. Political and Election-Related Communications**

Official Council social media accounts must not be used for party-political campaigning.

Council communications must remain factual, relevant and proportionate, particularly during election periods.

The Council will comply with applicable electoral, local government and communications requirements. Councillors remain responsible for ensuring that their personal political communications are clearly distinguishable from official Council communications.

## **11. Copyright and Use of Images**

The Council will only publish photographs, videos, graphics, music and other material where it has the necessary permission, licence or other lawful basis to do so.

Particular care will be taken when publishing images of children, vulnerable people or members of the public.

Where consent is required, appropriate consent should be obtained and recorded before publication.

## **12. Security**

Official Council social media accounts must be administered securely.

Where practicable:

- Login credentials should not be shared unnecessarily.
- Strong, unique passwords should be used.
- Multi-factor authentication should be enabled where available.
- Appropriate numbers of authorised administrators should have access.
- Access should be removed promptly when an administrator leaves their role.
- Account recovery information should be kept up to date.

Suspected unauthorised access, hacking or compromise of an official account must be reported promptly to the appropriate Council officer.

## **13. Responsibilities**

The Council will designate an appropriate person or persons to administer its official social media accounts.

Administrators are responsible for:

- Publishing authorised information.
- Checking information for accuracy before publication.
- Monitoring comments and messages within reasonable limits.
- Applying this policy consistently.
- Escalating complaints, safeguarding concerns, threats or potentially unlawful content where appropriate.
- Maintaining appropriate records where required.

Individual councillors and officers remain responsible for their own conduct when using social media.

## **14. Records and Retention**

The Council may retain relevant social media posts, messages, comments or moderation records where they form part of Council business or are required for legal, regulatory, complaint-handling, transparency or governance purposes.

Records will be managed in accordance with the Council's applicable document retention and information governance arrangements.

## **15. Emergencies and Urgent Information**

During emergencies or urgent local incidents, official social media may be used to distribute timely information and signpost residents to authoritative sources.

The Council will avoid publishing unverified information and will, where appropriate, direct residents to emergency services, local authorities or other competent organisations.

## **16. Review of the Policy**

This policy will be reviewed periodically and whenever there are significant changes to relevant legislation, Council procedures or social media practices. In any case not less than every 3 years.

The Council may amend this policy where necessary to ensure that its social media use remains appropriate, lawful, effective and in the public interest.

**This policy was approved by Full Council on: 26<sup>th</sup> August 2026**

**Review date:** Consider a review at 3 years, suggested August 2029