

WYLAM INSTITUTE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. Purpose

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.

Social media is essential to the success of communicating the work of Wylam Institute Community Association ('the Institute'). It is important for Trustees, employees and volunteers to participate in social media to engage with our audiences and stakeholders, contribute to relevant conversations, and promote the Institute's work through its social media accounts. We recognise that many organisations and individuals rely on information and communication online and that social media can support our objectives to provide facilities for the community and improve conditions of life.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines on standards for social media in:

- a) supporting and promoting the Institute,
- b) assisting Trustees, volunteers and the public to protect the Institute and its reputation, and
- c) avoiding any legal issues.

We want to ensure that Trustees, employees and volunteers using social media represent and reflect the Institute in the best way possible. It is also important to mitigate risks associated with the use of social media to protect our Trustees, staff and volunteers, and our work and reputation.

2. Policy principles

2.1 Social media may be used to:

- engage with the community and provide timely information, news and updates about the Institute and garden, community events and other activities associated with the Institute
- raise awareness of groups, classes and events arranged by external organisations or individuals and held at the Institute that could be of public interest
- gather insights from residents on Institute activities and services
- advertise vacancies for Trustees, employees or volunteers.

2.2 Institute Trustees, employees and volunteers are responsible for compliance with this policy. They should be aware of social media principles and processes and attend any training arranged.

2.3 Management of social media accounts is the responsibility of the Institute Trustees' Chair, Secretaries and Treasurer. Participation in social media on behalf of the Institute must be treated seriously and with respect. Social media content should be up-to-date and relevant, and should be removed when no longer required.

2.4 This social media policy complies with relevant laws including:

- UK GDPR rules on publishing personal information or data
 - privacy law (misusing private information or intruding on a person's right to privacy). See separate Privacy Statement on our website
 - copyright law for images or artwork on social media
 - defamation law
 - whistleblower protection law
 - equality and human rights law, including discrimination, victimisation, harassment and freedom of expression.
- 2.5 Any breaches of the law on Institute social media platforms will be acted on immediately by removing or deleting the content and reporting the matter to the police or other relevant bodies.

3. Procedures

- 3.1 The policy applies to all forms of social media and social networking sites relating to the Institute, which include:
- Wylam Institute website: general information promoting the Institute and an online booking system
 - Wylam Institute Facebook page: sharing news, events and encouraging residents to be involved in our work
 - Facebook Messenger: enquiries from the public relating to the Institute
 - emails: all communications relating to the management and activities at the Institute
 - WhatsApp: internal messaging portal for trustees, employees and volunteers
 - video-conferencing: for example, Skype, Zoom or Teams for attendance at internal Institute meetings.
- 3.2 Procedures apply to all social media platforms and online portals relating to the Institute and used by Trustees, employees and volunteers in a professional or personal capacity.
- 3.3 The Institute Chair is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. Questions about any aspect of these channels should be put to the Chair, a Trustee or the Secretaries of the Institute. Other than the Chair, Secretaries or Treasurer, no-one is permitted to post content about the Institute on the Institute's website or Facebook page without permission.
- 3.4 Information posted on social media or on emails and WhatsApp must reflect the Institute's ethos using a warm and friendly tone. Reasonable steps should be taken to check facts and seek verification to mitigate risks and legal action. All posts and comments should be attributed to the Institute and not an individual unless exceptional circumstances apply.
- 3.5 Personal opinions should not influence responses on social media accounts. Personal views should not be made clear by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'reposting' in the Institute's name unless it has been agreed by the Chair, Treasurer or Secretaries.
- 3.6 Social media content must have a benefit for our charitable purpose and objectives directly or indirectly and must accurately reflect the Institute's agreed position.
- 3.7 Responses on social media must be timely to support good engagement.

- 3.8 Content relating to members of the public or organisations, including photographs, videos etc., should have permission or rights granted. Consent must be obtained before using any content on social media that identifies a child or young person, an employee, or a volunteer.
- 3.9 Information received through social media, email or other channels will be treated sensitively and securely in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Data will be processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security, with protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss or damage.
- 3.10 Social media can be a challenging environment, and the Institute is committed to the safety of individuals using our channels. The Institute has a Safeguarding policy, and Trustees are available to support those who have concerns or require wellbeing support.
- 3.11 The nature of social media means that complaints and negative comments are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to our people and reputation. The Institute does not monitor social media regularly and any issues should be reported as soon as possible to catch any problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis situation, the Institute will communicate with its Trustees to agree an approach, as outlined in our Serious Incidents Reporting policy. Social media portals may be taken offline, or posts may be removed or deleted.
- 3.12 If a complaint is made about any social media activity or a policy breach identified, the issue will be referred to a Trustee for advice and possible investigation. Where the investigation finds evidence to indicate the policy has been breached, this may lead to:
- for employees: disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, or further training requirements
 - for Trustees and volunteers: expulsion, removal from officer role or further training requirements
 - for hirers, customers and visitors: relevant action being taken.
- 3.13 Artificial intelligence (AI) is a valuable tool that can support our communication activities. Any content created through AI must meet the standards outlined in our policies. Trustees should be aware of content generated by AI before it is published.

This policy will be reviewed by Trustees every 3 years.

Approval date: 7 January 2026