

Brandon Town Council Social Media Policy

Purpose

Brandon Town Council recognises social media enables quick, easy, low cost and direct communication between Brandon Town Council (BTC), its employees, councillors and third parties. The use of social media comes with a responsibility for appropriate use and therefore we need to ensure that as BTC employees and councillors, we all understand our responsibilities when using social media. To minimise any risks to BTC and to its employees and councillors, all employees and councillors must comply with this policy.

Whilst BTC prides itself on being an open and transparent organisation it is still necessary to protect both the public reputation of BTC and the confidential information of BTC, employees, councillors, customers, and suppliers and ensure that we act in accordance with BTC policies and strategy.

Organisational Scope

This policy applies to all employees and councillors of BTC.

Scope and definitions

This policy applies to employees' and councillor's use of all forms of social media and online media.

The use of social media is an increasingly popular activity and plays an important role in many people's lives. However, the use of social media can easily blur the lines between professional and personal boundaries. Employees and councillors need to be aware of how they should use social media in a way that respects these boundaries and avoids damaging BTC's reputation or breaching BTC's policies in a way that could affect their employment or appointment.

Social Media - includes any websites and applications that enable people to socially interact with one another electronically, and give comment or opinion through words, images or video content, often in real time.

Uses of Social Media

There are two main uses of social media in a BTC context:

- Employees and councillors using social media as part of their role at BTC.
- Employees and councillors using social media *outside* of their BTC roles.

Social Media Principles

BTC employees and councillors may use social media platforms. Employees and councillors must however act in accordance with BTC's policies. For example, employees should not insult colleagues or upload inappropriate or offensive material and should be respectful to others when making statements on social media.

Employees and councillors must take care when mixing their personal and professional life in the social media world. BTC respects the right for employees and councillors to speak freely on social media and this policy supports that principle. However, employees and councillors must remember at all times that other employees, councillors, customers and suppliers often have access to the online content posted. This should be kept in mind when publishing information online that can be seen by others or reposted in an unrestricted environment on other social media. Social media never forgets and once published it is essentially a permanent record.

Employees and councillors must not publish or discuss confidential information, refer to their own opinion as being that of BTC's, or appear to represent BTC's view on any topics (*this is done by the official Brandon Town Council channels of communication*).

<https://www.facebook.com/share/1KYuecXyJL/?mibextid=LQQJ4d>

<https://www.brandontc.org.uk/community/brandon-town-council-20066/home/>

Employees and councillors should not post on social media any confidential or sensitive information (*or make comments about confidential or sensitive information*) related to BTC or its employees, councillors, customers or suppliers without their express permission and in terms of sensitive personal information of others, without their prior written consent.

It is important that employees and councillors do not commence, react or respond to negative posts or to a third party's attempt to start inappropriate conversations about BTC or its employees, councillors, customers or suppliers. If employees or councillors are aware of potentially damaging conversations or posts involving BTC employees or councillors, they must alert the Town Clerk. If employees or councillors are aware of potentially damaging conversations or posts that could damage BTC's business interests or reputation, they should alert the Town Clerk where it is appropriate to do so.

Employees and councillors should not use social media in a way that:

- disparages or otherwise brings into disrepute BTC, its employees, councillors, customers or suppliers

- harasses, bullies or unlawfully discriminates against BTC's employees, councillors, customers, suppliers or other third parties
- breaches any of BTC's policies
- breaches any other laws or regulatory requirements.

Compliance

Employees and councillors need to be aware that breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against them. Where such breaches are deemed to be gross misconduct, disciplinary action may result in dismissal.

BTC may require an employee or councillor to remove any social media content that BTC considers to constitute a breach of this policy (*where it is in the employee's or councillors control to remove the content*) or to make all reasonable attempts to remove the social media content (*if the content is not within the employee's or councillors control*). An employee's or councillors failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.