



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A guide for staff on using social media to promote the work of Talatton Parish Hall and in a personal capacity.

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. Talatton Parish Hall will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

Date of last review: 27 October 2024

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Introduction

What is social media?

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video content), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating Talaton Parish Hall's work. Some staff needs to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of Talaton Parish Hall's work.

Why do we need a social media policy?

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to Talaton Parish Hall's work. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe. Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for all trustees and applies to content posted on both a Talaton Parish Hall device and a personal device. Before engaging in work-related social media activity, staff must read this policy.

Setting out the social media policy

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of Talaton Parish Hall and the use of social media by staff in both a professional and personal capacity. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help staff support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

Point of contact for social media

Our Tanya Jones and Alan Franklin are responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, speak to the Bookings Secretary. No other staff member can post content on Talaton Parish Hall's official channels without the permission of the Secretary.

Which social media channels do we use?

Talaton Parish Hall uses the following social media channels:

<http://www.talatonparishhall.org.uk>

<https://www.facebook.com/TalatonParishHall>

Talaton Parish Hall has a Facebook account which it uses to share news with supporters and to encourage people to become involved in our work.

Using Talaton Parish Hall's social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. Tanya Jones is responsible for setting up and managing Talaton Parish Hall's social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by the Secretary will have access to these accounts.
2. Our Bookings Secretary responds to comments within 48 hours.
3. Be an ambassador for our brand. Staff should ensure they reflect Talaton Parish Hall values in what they post and use our tone of voice. Our brand guidelines set out our tone of voice that all staff should refer to when posting content on Talaton Parish Hall's social media channels.
4. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for Talaton Parish Hall and accurately reflects Talaton Parish Hall's agreed position.
5. Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them
6. Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images.
7. Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.
8. If staff outside of Bookings Secretary / Secretary wish to contribute content for social media, whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, they should speak to the Secretary about this.
9. Staff shouldn't post content about supporters or service users without their express permission. If staff 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 Talaton Parish Hall. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, staff must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.
10. Always check facts. Staff should not automatically assume that material is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation.
11. Be honest. Say what you know to be true or have a good source for. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.
12. Staff should refrain from offering personal opinions via Talaton Parish Hall's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about Talaton Parish Hall's position on a particular issue, please speak to the Bookings Secretary or Secretary.
13. It is vital that Talaton Parish Hall does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.
14. Staff should 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.
15. Staff should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of Talaton Parish Hall. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, the Talaton Parish Hall can ensure the consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.
16. Talaton Parish Hall is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We have every right to express views on policy, including the policies of parties, but we can't tell people how to vote.

17. If a complaint is made on Talaton Parish Hall's social media channels, staff should seek advice from the Secretary before responding. If they are not available, then staff should speak to the Bookings Secretary.

18. 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.

The Bookings Secretary regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of Talaton Parish Hall 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 Booking Secretary / Secretary will do the following advise the management process.

If any staff outside of the Booking Secretary / Secretary become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on Talaton Parish Hall's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the Secretary immediately.

Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflicts might arise. Talaton Parish Hall staff are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with Talaton Parish Hall's values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive Talaton Parish Hall. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of Talaton Parish Hall. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about Talaton Parish Hall's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent Talaton Parish Hall's positions, policies or opinions."
2. Staff who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at Talaton Parish Hall should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and the Booking Secretary / Secretary. Similarly, staff who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for Talaton Parish Hall should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the Secretary.
3. Those in senior management, and 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 Talaton Parish Hall's view.
4. Use common sense and good judgment. Be aware of your association with Talaton Parish Hall and ensure your profile and related content are consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the general public.
5. Please don't approach high-profile people 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 charity. This includes asking for retweets about the charity.
If you have any information about high-profile people that have a connection to our cause, or if there is someone who you would like to support the charity, please speak to the Booking Secretary / Secretary to share the details.
6. If a staff member is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to Talaton Parish Hall, they should talk to the Secretary immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.
7. Talaton Parish Hall is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing Talaton Parish Hall, staff are expected to hold Talaton Parish Hall's position of neutrality. Staff who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from Talaton Parish Hall and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

8. Never use Talaton Parish Hall's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the Secretary.

9. Always protect yourself and the charity. Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully. When you are using social media sites at work, you must do so safely.

10. Think about your 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 polite and the first to correct your own mistakes.

11. We encourage staff to share posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support Talaton Parish Hall and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage staff to do this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the Bookings Secretary / Secretary who will respond as appropriate.

Further guidelines

Libel

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether staff are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring Talaton Parish Hall into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright law

All staff must abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. 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 make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that Talaton Parish Hall is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date.

Discrimination and harassment

Staff should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official Talaton Parish Hall 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

Lobbying Act

Charities are legally allowed to campaign to bring about a change in policy or law to further their organisational purpose. In most cases, spending on charity campaigns that are in accordance with charity law will not be regulated under electoral law. However, the Lobbying Act, which was passed in January 2014, states that during national elections (known as regulated periods) spending on campaigning activities may be regulated.

Charities which spend more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, during the regulated period, need to register with the Electoral Commission. To abide by the Lobbying Act, campaigning activities on social media must not be seen as intending to influence people's voting choice. During these periods, all campaigning activity will be reviewed by the Secretary.

Use of social media in the recruitment process

Recruitment should be carried out by the constitution and associated procedures and guidelines. Any advertising of vacancies should be done through the Secretary / Chair Vacancies maybe shared routinely on LinkedIn.

There should be no systematic or routine checking of candidate's 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 Talaton Parish Hall's Equal Opportunities 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 considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the Secretary 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 becoming targets for online grooming.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18-years-old via social media, staff should ensure the online relationship with Talaton Parish Hall follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Staff should ensure that young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online, and given guidance on security/privacy settings as necessary. Staff should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the young person and Talaton Parish Hall content and other content is appropriate for them. Please refer to our Talaton Parish Hall Safeguarding Policy.

Responsibilities and beach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of Talaton Parish Hall is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. For staff, breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Please refer to the Secretary for further information on disciplinary procedures. Staff who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy should seek advice from the Booking Secretary / Secretary.

Public Interest Disclosure

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, if a staff member releases information through Talaton Parish Hall's social media channels that is considered to be in the interest of the public, Talaton Parish Hall's Secretary must be informed before any further action is taken.