



TARLAND DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Charity No. SCO41598 Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Tarland Development Group Social Media Policy

Context

Social media are fantastic tools to enable Tarland Development Group (TDG) to reach a broad spectrum of the community, as well as to network with other similar organisations. It is important that TDG embraces the possibilities created by social media. This policy has been written to guide representatives of TDG in their use of these tools, to make communications effective, positive, and legal.

These principles and standards apply to any public **and** private communications you make through social media in the capacity of a trustee, member, volunteer or employee of TDG.

‘Social media’ is a term that encompasses any website or application that allows users to share content and network through the internet. This covers TDG website content, any online blogs, social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Vine, Flickr and Instagram etc.), as well as any other platforms you may use in your role with TDG.

Public social media communication is that which is directed to the general public at large, with no privacy settings in place to limit the audience of a post. This is an effective way to communicate information about public events and news. However in posting publicly you must be aware that anyone can see what you post, even if they are not the audience you have in mind when you create the content.

Private social media communication is that which is within discrete pairs or groups of individuals, and can be accessed by that group only. In this way social media platforms can be used to communicate with particular individuals. For example they might be used to follow up a private query from a member of the public about a publicly advertised event, or to network with another community development group. Despite the fact that the content is not publicly visible and the platform may feel informal to you, the information is still given as an official TDG representative, and is on record.

Key principles

Fundamentally * **think before you post** *. Always remember that participation online results in your comments being permanently available and open to being re-published in other media.

The following key principles should guide all social media activity:

Professional

- Be professional and courteous – remember that you are responsible for the reputation of TDG.
- It is helpful to approach any communication made through social media with the same consideration you would approach an in-person TDG public outreach event.
- Make sure any third party content being shared is from a reputable source.
- Be aware of which account you are posting from.
- If you are responsible for managing a TDG page please check regularly for any comments or messages that you might have received. Ensure that roles are clearly delegated so that messages are not missed.

Discrete and respectful of individuals

- Never give out personal details such as home address and phone numbers.
- Posts should avoid political, religious or spiritual bias and content.
- Respect your audience – please do not engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the workplace. Show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory.
- Never post confidential or offensive information.
- Before posting media in which individuals are identified ensure that their permission has been obtained.

Relevant

- Remember that posts should be relevant to the stated purpose of TDG: *“The advancement of community development and in particular promotion of the arts, culture, heritage; environmental enhancement and protection; the provision of recreational activities; the support of honeybees and beekeepers, improvement in the standard of beekeeping, and promotion of honeybee products; all within the Parish of Tarland and Howe of Cromar in the Marr Area of Aberdeenshire.” (TDG Constitution, 2017).*
- Posts should not promote private individuals, for-profit enterprises or commercial activities with no or little association to TDG.
- While it may be appropriate to signpost to other local community events, TDG's social media pages are not intended as village noticeboards, and visitors to them should be able to get a clear idea of TDG's values and activities.

Compliant with legislation

- Stay within legal frameworks and be aware that libel, defamation, copyright and data protection laws apply.
- If posting content which includes music, film or images you must ensure that both the creator of the medium and any individuals shown in it have given permission for it to be shared. In the case of children or vulnerable adults permission should be sought from the parent or carer.
- Some media may have a Creative Commons Licence and so is free to re-use without permission.

Veracious

- Post only information that is truthful.

- Use reliable sources and reference these where appropriate.
- If you are providing a link, make sure you know where the link is going, that it is going to a reputable site and it contains the information that is relevant to your post.

Coherent and of high quality

- Check posts for correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. Don't post in haste! Please check over what you've written before you post and get someone else to check it if you are unsure.
- Avoid the use of acronyms and jargon – assume that your audience doesn't know what that acronym or jargon means.
- If you are posting photos or images, please make sure they are of high quality. If they are not, find another image or don't post an image with your post.
- Make sure that any links in posts work.
- Users should avoid duplicate posts where possible. Please take a minute to check that the information you are posting hasn't already been shared within the last 48 hours.
- Provide worthwhile information and perspective.
- Ensure the correct visibility settings are in place before posting, i.e. that the post can be viewed and shared by the public if desired.

Consider other page administrators

- Please be aware that TDG social media have multiple administrators, so avoid changing settings unless agreed with other administrators and be aware of scheduled posts by others.

Responding to posts about TDG

This section of the social media policy gives guidance on how to react to posts about TDG.

Hopefully the majority of references to TDG will be positive. In these instances it may be appropriate to respond with thanks.

If the reference to TDG is negative then how you respond will depend on what exactly is alleged. If you feel that the post is threatening to individuals or would cause reputational risk to TDG then **the trustee body should be alerted immediately and an appropriate response agreed.**

Types of negative social media interactions may include:

- Criticism from an unhappy supporter - the TDG Complaints Policy may be used to resolve their issue as quickly as possible.
- Misinformation – if a post contains inaccurate information about TDG it may be possible to politely fix the situation with facts.
- Spam – this should be reported to the appropriate platform.
- Trolling - is the author trying to taunt you into a response? Don't be baited. Keep your response calm and polite. If the negative commentary happens multiple times then it may be appropriate to block an individual from a page. If the confrontation has escalated to this point the trustee body should be consulted on the response.

Personal social media use by TDG trustees and staff

TDG trustees and staff are respectfully asked to take some key points into account when using personal social media accounts and profiles.

As a representative of TDG you should not be seen to promote dangerous, illegal or irresponsible actions/information by either yourself or those you associate with. Please be accountable for your online actions outwith your work at TDG and conduct social media interactions and content with integrity and respect.

Respect the needs of TDG to protect its reputation, its legal obligations, its information, and its systems. You should not publish content about TDG, its services, facilities, staff, volunteers, clients or third parties that could be considered as inappropriate, confidential, offensive, defamatory, discriminatory, harassing, illegal, embarrassing, threatening, intimidating, which may incite hatred or compromise the safety of staff, volunteers or clients.

If the above guidance on personal social media use is not followed then it may be necessary for the TDG trustee body to take action, such as the reassignment of control over social media accounts or even, in an extreme case, suspension from trustee or staff duties.

If you have any doubts about online content, please consult the relevant TDG trustee for that project.

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To be reviewed annually.