

## Social Media Policy: March 2025

### Scope

The aim of this policy is to set out a Code of Practice to provide guidance to Community People Trustees, staff and volunteers and others who engage with Community People using online communications, collectively referred to as social media.

### Definition

- 1.1 Social media is a collective term used to describe methods of publishing on the internet.
- 1.2 This policy covers all forms of social media and social networking sites which include (but are not limited to):
  - Community People's website
  - Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, Tik Tok and other social networking sites
  - YouTube and other video clips and podcast sites
  - LinkedIn
  - Blogs and discussion forums
  - Email

As of March 2025, Community People currently use the following social media channels:

- Facebook
  - Instagram
  - LinkedIn
  - YouTube
- 1.3 A number of Community People staff are responsible for the day-to-day publishing of our social media channels. If you have questions about any aspect of these channels, please speak to the CEO. No other staff member or volunteer is permitted to post content on Community People's official channels without the permission of the CEO.
  - 1.4 The principles of this policy apply to Community People Trustees, staff and volunteers and also applies to others communicating with Community People including Community People members.
  - 1.5 The policy sits alongside relevant existing policies which need to be taken into consideration.
  - 1.6 The current Members Code of Conduct applies to online activity in the same way it does to other written or verbal communication.
  - 1.7 Individual Community People Trustees and staff are responsible for what they post on behalf of Community People and in a personal capacity.
  - 1.8 In the main, Community People Trustees and staff have the same legal duties online as anyone else, but failure to comply with the law may have more serious consequences with regards to employment status and code of conduct complaints.

## 2. Social media may be used to:

- Distribute agendas, post minutes and dates of meetings
- Advertise events and activities
- Promote good news stories with a linked website or press page
- Advertise job vacancies
- Retweet or share information from partner agencies such as Principal Authorities, Police, Library, Health etc.
- Announce new information
- Post or share information from other Community People members such as schools, sports clubs, community groups and charities
- Share any other information that is relevant to the community

## 3. Code of Practice

3.1 When using social media (including email) Community People Trustees and staff must be mindful of the information they post in both a personal and Community People capacity and keep the tone of any comments respectful and informative.

3.2 Online content should be accurate, objective, balanced and informative.

3.3 Community People Trustees and staff must not:

- Hide their identity using false names or pseudonyms
- Present personal opinions as that of Community People
- Present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment to Community People
- Post controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks
- Engage in personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications
- Use an individual's name unless given written permission to do so
- Publish photographs or videos of minors without parental permission
- Post any information that infringes copyright of others
- Post any information that may be deemed libel
- Post online activity that constitutes bullying or harassment
- Bring Community People into disrepute, including through content posted in a personal capacity



- Post offensive language relating to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age, religion or belief
- Conduct any online activity that violates laws, regulations or that constitutes a criminal offence

#### **4. Beneficiaries of Community People membership must not:**

- Hide their identity using false names or pseudonyms
- Present personal opinions as that of their organisation
- Present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment to Community People
- Post controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks
- Engage in personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications
- Use an individual's name unless given written permission to do so
- Publish photographs or videos of minors without parental permission
- Post any information that infringes copyright of others
- Post any information that may be deemed libel
- Post online activity that constitutes bullying or harassment
- Bring Community People into disrepute, including through content posted in a personal capacity
- Post offensive language relating to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age, religion or belief
- Conduct any online activity that violates laws, regulations or that constitutes a criminal offence

#### **5. Community People will not:**

- Allow complaints to be filed via social media. All complaints must be received through the official channels as stated in the Complaints Policy.
- Interact with negative comments.
- Tolerate any abuse on staff or Trustees on social media, or in person. Any abuse will be reported.

5.1 Publishing untrue statements about a person which is damaging to their reputation is libel and can result in a court action and fine for damages.

5.2 This also applies if someone else publishes something libellous on your social media site. A successful libel claim will result in an award of damages against you.

5.3 Posting copyright images or text on social media sites is an offence. Breach of copyright will result in an award of damages against you.

5.4 Publishing personal data of individuals without permission is a breach of Data Protection legislation and an offence.



- 5.5 Publication of obscene material is a criminal offence and is subject to a custodial sentence.
- 5.6 Anyone with concerns regarding content placed on social media sites that denigrate Community People Trustees, staff or members should report them to the Community People CEO.
- 5.7 Misuse of social media content that is contrary to this and other policies could result in action being taken.
- 5.8 Community People’s CEO acts as the moderator of Community People’s social media output and is responsible for posting and monitoring content to ensure it complies with the Social Media Policy.
- 5.9 The moderator will have authority to remove any posts made by third parties from Community People social media pages which are deemed to be of a defamatory or libellous nature.
- 5.10 Where appropriate, the moderator will have the authority to report any such posting to any other appropriate agency including Sussex Police and West Sussex County Council’s Safeguarding Unit.

## Version Control

### To be reviewed annually – March 2026

| Version Number | Date of Update | Amendments      | Owner     |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 2.0            | 03/25          | Policy reviewed | CEO; Exec |
| 1.0            | 11/24          | First published |           |