

## USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Angus Council is committed to using social media to communicate directly with our customers. Social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, give us the opportunity to create and participate in online communities or networks to encourage and facilitate engagement and discussion.

### Our objectives

- provide accessible, reliable and interactive communication
- stimulate interest and participation in council activity
- engage with a broad range of residents
- improve services by replacing or complementing existing ways of working

Unlike our website, which relies on people coming to us for information, social media allows people to opt to receive information from us, respond to it and share it with others using online and mobile channels and devices. It can therefore be a particularly successful communication tool during incidents, such as periods of severe winter weather.

### Current position

Social media platforms currently being used by Angus Council include:

- **Twitter:** to communicate short, simple information such as news, road closures, school closures, adverse weather, events etc
- **Facebook:** for service specific marketing and campaign activity as well as a general corporate communications channel
- **Communities of Practice:** online employee discussion forums across services and authorities to share experience and expertise
- **YouTube:** a video-sharing site used to promote attractions and events in the area

The Angus Council social media profiles are currently administered and populated by the PR team. In addition economic development has established a presence for specific tourism products which complement existing on and off line marketing activity. These initial authorised online profiles are a starting point on our social media journey - allowing us to manage our activity as we develop expertise and explore the opportunities for better communication and engagement.

### Access to social media

The council aims to provide employees with access to social media sites from their work PCs/mobile devices. For some employees access is/will be required to allow them to actively participate in social media networks/channels on behalf of the council. For others access will allow them to keep track of, or personally join, the social media sites used by the council, which will serve to increase employee awareness and knowledge of council business. Council wide access will be rolled out as the required anti-virus protection and internet filtering arrangements are added to the IT infrastructure during 2012/13, with priority given to those who need access for business.

### Guidelines for Use of Social Media

Angus Council recognises the benefits of social media and welcomes its use. However, we also acknowledge that certain risks are associated with the use of these new channels.

These guidelines, which apply to all employees and elected members, set out our approach to the use of social media and ground rules for you to follow. Their purpose is to make clear the standards expected of you and to ensure that we make the most of social media opportunities and experiences.

## **Approach**

In short our approach is to use social media in the same way we conduct our usual day to day business – by using sound judgment and common sense; by following existing Angus Council policies related to [conduct](#), confidentiality and [internet](#) usage; and by adhering to the established standards required of our posts and roles.

## **Access**

The council aims to provide employees with access to social media sites from work PCs and mobile devices. This council-wide access will be rolled out during 2012/13.

## **Activity**

The council's corporate Twitter and Facebook accounts are our main social media platforms, with some product specific marketing activity also taking place. Where a need is identified for a separate social media presence for your service, project, activity, group or event, a Social Media Business Case proposal ([appendix 1](#)) should be completed. The business case requires the approval of your head of service before it can be submitted for authorisation by the PR manager. No social media presence for council business should be established without this consent.

## **Your business use of social media**

Social media is designed and operates as an informal and accessible way of communicating with people who share interests. This encourages discussion but please remember you are still expected to behave in accordance with your terms and conditions of employment. In this context social media is no different from face-to-face, telephone or email contact, so observe the standards of conduct already expected of you and you shouldn't go wrong.

To help you, please follow these guiding principles for any social media activities that are part of your work:

### **1 Be responsible**

The council trusts you to use social media responsibly. When you are participating on social networks on behalf of the council you should always disclose that, so people know who they are in discussion with. Remember you are responsible for your actions on social media - enjoy using it and be a good ambassador for the council.

### **2 Be respectful**

Set the tone by being polite, open and professional and although you are speaking on behalf of the council speak as a person not an organisation. Make sure that you respect people's confidentiality – do not disclose non-public information or the personal information of others.

### **3 Be responsive**

Respond to questions and comments in a timely manner, appropriate to the type of social media you are using. However don't get drawn into an argument and always take confidential conversations offline. Put people in touch with others if you can't help – remember ACCESSLine is still our main contact point for customer service requests.

### **4 Be credible and clear**

Be accurate, open and fair. Use conversational language not jargon. Move the debate on positively if you can but remember constructive criticism can help us improve so don't shy away from it, engage with your audience politely and professionally.

### **5 Be confident**

Don't be scared of participating – social media is about conversation, something we do every day. However if you're about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, trust your instinct and pause to think about it. Feel confident in what you say before you say it – you can't take it back when it's out there.

## 6 Be legal

Remember to stay within the legal framework and be aware that defamation, copyright, FOI and data protection laws apply. If you are unsure please speak with your manager.

### **Your personal use of social media**

It is your personal choice whether or not you participate in any social media activity in your own time – the views and opinions that you express are your own. You have personal responsibility for anything that you say online.

However please remember you are an ambassador for the council and should be aware that any information which you post about the council cannot be entirely separate from your working life. What you say openly can be accessed around the world within seconds, it might be shared or re-published elsewhere and it will continue to be available for all to see in the future.

Please be aware that anything you post on an online public site, may be viewed by or reported to the council and can be used in a disciplinary context.

Your use of social media during working hours should be related to your work and be in accordance with the council's [email and internet policy](#). All employee internet use is logged and reports on usage can be provided to managers upon request.

***If you have any queries about using social media in the course of your work, please contact the Public Relations team. If you have a query about the email and internet policy, please contact the Personnel team.***

<b>Name of proposed social media account</b>	
<b>Department and division</b>	
<b>Contact name</b>	
<b>telephone</b>	
<b>email</b>	

<b>SUMMARY OF YOUR PROPOSAL</b>

<b>OUTCOMES &amp; ACTIVITY</b>	
<b>Describe your desired outcomes</b>	
<b>Who is your target audience?</b>	
<b>Which social media network(s) do you want to use?</b>	
<b>Please outline how you plan to use your social media account – frequency of use, format, content etc?</b>	
<b>Please give the proposed start and, if appropriate, finishing dates for your social media activity.</b>	
<b>Please explain how this social media activity will integrate with or complement the existing channels of communication and engagement you use for this work?</b>	

RESOURCES & RISKS	
What resources will be allocated to deliver, update and monitor your social media presence?	
Do the staff involved have the appropriate skills or will training be required?	
Please identify any risks associated with your proposed activity and how you plan to mitigate them?	

EVALUATION	
How will you evaluate the effectiveness of your social media activity?	

In making this submission I confirm that I have read and understood the council's social media guidelines and email & internet policy
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DEPARTMENTAL AUTHORISATION	
Name (head of service)	
Date	

This submission should be sent to PR Manager, Angus House, Orchardbank Business Park, FORFAR DD8 1AX E: [naulty@angus.gov.uk](mailto:naulty@angus.gov.uk) for approval.

PR APPROVAL	
Name	
Date	