



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A guide for members and trustees on using social media to promote the work of the Risborough & District Model Railway Club (referred to as the “Club” herein) and in a personal capacity.

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RISBOROUGH & DISTRICT MODEL RAILWAY CLUB



1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This policy is intended for all members and trustees and applies to content posted on our social media platforms. Before engaging in work-related social media activity, members and trustees must read this policy.

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of the Club and the use of social media by members and trustees. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help members and trustees support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the Club and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

1.2 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.

1.2 Point of contact for social media

The following persons are responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring, and management of our social media channels.

Public Facebook – Gary Day,

Members Facebook – Mick Moignard & James Aitken.

Club Website – Mick Moignard & James Aitken.

Youtube Channel – Gary Day.

Railex website – Tim Peacock, Mick Moignard & James Aitken.

Our social media is regularly checked by the persons detailed above. The named persons will endeavour to respond to comments within a reasonable time. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, speak to the relevant person.

Use of public social media such as RMWeb is considered “personal”, conduct for which is detailed in section 2.2.

2.0 Guidelines

2.1 Using RDMRC’s social media channels — appropriate conduct

When using the Club’s social media, members and trustees shall:

- Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for the Club and accurately reflects the Club’s agreed position.
- Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help, and engage with them.
- Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings, or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images.
- Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.
- Not post content about third parties without their express permission. If members and trustees are sharing information about third parties, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from the Club. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, members and

trustees must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.

- Always check facts. Members and trustees 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.
- 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.
- Refrain from offering personal opinions via the Club's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about the Club's position on a particular issue, please speak to the relevant person detailed in section 1.2.
- Not to commit an illegal act or encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.
- 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.
- Should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of the Club. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, the Club can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.

The Club 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.

If a complaint is made on the Club's social media channels, members and trustees should seek advice from the named relevant persons in section 1.2 before responding. If they are not available, then members and trustees should speak to the Club Secretary.

Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis 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 Club.

The named persons in section 1.2 regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of the Club so we can catch any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis, the relevant persons detailed in section 1.2 will act accordingly to address the situation.

If any members or trustees become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on the Club's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the Club Secretary immediately.

2.2 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. Club members and trustees are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with the Club's values and policies, both online and in real life.

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When using personal social media, Club members and trustees shall:

- Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive the Club. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of Club. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about the Club's activities, you must use a disclaimer such as: *"The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent the Club's positions, policies or opinions."*
- Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with the Club and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the public.
- Not use the Club's logos unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the Secretary.
- Protect themselves and the Club. 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, it is important that you do so safely.
- Think about your and the Club's reputation. 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.
- Take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing Club's view.

Members and trustees who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they are associated with the Club should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the Secretary. Similarly, members and trustees who want to start blogging and wish to say that they are a member of the Club should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the Secretary.

If a Club member or trustee is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to the Club, they should talk to the Secretary immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.

When representing Club, members and trustees are expected to hold the Club's position of neutrality. Members and trustees who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from the Club and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

The Club encourages members and trustees to share tweets and posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support the Club and its activities. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage members and trustees 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 Secretary who will respond as appropriate.

3.0 Further guidelines

3.1 Libel

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

3.2 Copyright law

It is critical that all members and trustees 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.

3.3 Confidentiality

Any communications that members and trustees make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that the Club is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date.

3.4 Discrimination and harassment

Members and trustees should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official [*charity name*] 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.

3.5 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.

3.6 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 member or trustee considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the Secretary immediately.

3.7 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 from becoming targets for online grooming.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18-years-old via social media, members and trustees should ensure the online relationship with the Club follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Members and trustees 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. Members and trustees should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the young person and Club content and other content is appropriate for them. Please refer to our Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy.

3.8 Responsibilities and beach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of the Club is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. For members and trustees, breaches of policy may result in dismissal from the Club, depending on the severity of the issue. Members and trustees who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Secretary.

3.9 Public Interest Disclosure

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, if a member or trustee releases information through the Club's social media channels that is in the interest of the public, the Club Secretary must be consulted before any further action is taken.