
Social Media Policy

For

Society of Agriculture

Policy date	01.01.26
Date to be reviewed	Annually

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This policy applies to Society of Agriculture, a charitable incorporated organisation registered in England and Wales with Charity Commission number: 1212403 (**Charity**).

1.2 The charitable objects of the Charity are:

To advance the education of the public in the subject of Agricultural Management and Operation by such charitable means as the trustees in their discretion think fit, particularly but not exclusively by:

- (a) Maintaining and improving the standards and practice of Agricultural Management and Operation;
- (b) Promoting all aspects of Agricultural Management and Operation, especially in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;
- (c) Encouraging the study of Agricultural Management and Operation;

“Agricultural Management and Operation” includes but is not limited to all aspects of the science, production, conservation, amenity, economics and art of managing, marketing, consulting about and otherwise supporting the management and operation of agriculture and related rural businesses, their products and services. (**Objects**).

1.3 The Charity is governed by the charity trustees of the Charity (**Charity Trustees**) who have a duty, acting at all times in the best interests of the Charity, to apply the Charity’s assets to advance the Objects and have ultimate responsibility for all grant-making decisions.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to minimise the risks to the Charity through its use of social media. This policy applies to the use of all forms of social media, including all social networking sites, internet postings and blogs. It applies to the use of social media for the Charity’s purposes as well as personal use that may affect the Charity in any way.

2.2 For the purposes of this policy “social media” shall include (but is not limited to):

- (a) Popular social network sites such as X (formerly known as Twitter) and Facebook;

- (b) Photographic social network sites such as Instagram and Flickr;
- (c) Videographic social network sites such as TikTok and YouTube; and
- (d) Professional social network sites such as LinkedIn.

2.3 This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services and may be amended from time to time.

2.4 This policy applies to all Charity Trustees, volunteers, staff, members, agents or contractors of the Charity as the case may be from time to time.

3. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS POLICY?

3.1 The Charity Trustees have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.

3.2 The Charity Trustees may delegate responsibility for overseeing the implementation of this policy to others within the Charity, however, delegated decisions should be reported back to the Charity Trustees (who hold ultimate responsibility).

3.3 Any questions about the day-to-day application of this policy (including reporting the misuse of social media) should be referred to the Director.

4. COMPLIANCE WITH RELATED POLICIES AND AGREEMENTS

4.1 Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of the Charity's policies or governing document. If an internet post would breach any of the Charity's policies or governing document in another forum, it would also breach them in an online forum.

4.2 References for other individuals on social or professional networking sites should never be provided. These references, positive and negative, can be attributed to the Charity and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the Charity.

4.3 If any of the above is breached by an individual, they may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

5. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- 5.1 Personal use of social media is never permitted during working hours or by means of the Charity's computers, networks, and other IT resources and communications systems.

6. PROHIBITED USE

- 6.1 People to whom this policy applies must not:

- (a) make any social media communications that could damage the Charity's interests or reputation, even indirectly;
- (b) use social media to:
 - (i) defame or disparage the Charity, its Charity Trustees, staff, volunteers or any third party;
 - (ii) harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against a Charity Trustee(s), staff, volunteers of third parties;
 - (iii) make false or misleading statements; or
 - (iv) impersonate a Charity Trustee(s), colleagues, or third parties;
- (c) express opinions on behalf of the Charity via social media, unless expressly authorised to do so by the Director. Training may be required to obtain such authorisation;
- (d) post comments about sensitive topics, such as the Charity's performance, its Charity Trustees, operations, beneficiaries, confidential information and intellectual property;
- (e) use or otherwise include the Charity's logos or other trademarks (as the case may be) in any social media posting or in any social media profile; or
- (f) add contacts made during the course of association and/or employment with the Charity to personal social networking accounts (other than LinkedIn).

- 6.2 The contact details of contacts made during the course of any employment with the Charity are the Charity's confidential information. On termination of employment, an employee must provide the Charity with a copy of all that information, delete all that information from their personal social networking account(s) and destroy any further copies of that information that the employee may have.

7. THE CHARITY'S USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- 7.1 The Charity recognises that social media offers a platform for the Charity to perform marketing, stay connected with the public and build its profile online.
- 7.2 Any statement, publication, comment, sharing (or re-sharing) made in a social media environment must be in furtherance of the Charity's objects, and be in the best interests of the Charity.
- 7.3 Where people to whom this policy applies are required to speak on behalf of the Charity on social media, approval for that communication must always be obtained from the Director.
- 7.4 Those who are authorised by the Charity Trustees to post on social media on behalf of the Charity will be required to undergo training before doing so and certain requirements and restrictions with regard to their activities may be imposed.
- 7.5 The Charity may be involved in issues that provoke strong emotions. Content of any kind that is posted on social media on behalf of the Charity may only engage on emotive issues where doing so is in furtherance of the Charity's objects and is in the Charity's best interests, and having regard to any risk to the Charity in doing so, including, but not limited to:
- (a) potential reputational damage to the Charity;
 - (b) the impact on the Charity's resources (including those representing the Charity, such as the Charity Trustees, staff or volunteers as may be the case from time to time); and
 - (c) any other rules or regulations that may apply.
- 7.6 The Charity may decide to use social media to engage in campaigning and political activity, for example, to support or oppose a change in government policy or the law. Campaigning of this kind is subject to additional rules, set out in the Charity Commission's Guidance on:

Campaigning and Political Activity: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/political-activity-and-campaigning-by-charities> (as updated from time to time). The Charity Trustees will have regard to these rules and ensure those authorised to post on social media on behalf of the Charity have read and understand the additional rules and understand the potential implications for the Charity in engaging in campaigning or political activities.

- 7.7 Where the Charity is contacted for comments about the organisation for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, the enquiry should be directed to the Director and no response should be given without written approval.

8. GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- 8.1 Where using personal social media accounts, it should be made clear in posts and in personal profiles that posts of any kind are made in a personal capacity only and, where affiliation with the Charity is disclosed, that posts do not represent or reflect the views of the Charity. Posts should be written in the first person, and personal email addresses should be used for account details.
- 8.2 Those posting on personal social media accounts should be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that they are personally responsible for all communications which are published on the internet for anyone to see.
- 8.3 Where affiliation with the Charity is disclosed in social media profiles or in any social media postings, it must be stated that views of the account holder do not represent those of the Charity (unless they are authorised to speak on our behalf as set out in **Error! Bookmark not defined.****Error! Reference source not found.**). It should also be ensured that profiles and any content posted are consistent with the image presented to Charity Trustees, volunteers, beneficiaries, staff and anyone else they come into contact with during their engagement or association (as the case may be) with the Charity.
- 8.4 Where there is any uncertainty or concern about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, do not post it until it has been discussed with the Director.
- 8.5 Social media content that disparages or reflects poorly on the Charity, or anyone associated with the Charity, should be reported to the Director.

9. MONITORING

9.1 The Charity reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, activities which use the Charity's IT resources and communications systems, including, but not limited to, social media postings and activities, for legitimate Charity purposes which include:

- (a) ascertaining and demonstrating that in using the systems expected standards are being met; and
- (b) the detection and investigation of unauthorised use of the systems (including where this is necessary to prevent or detect crime).

10. RECRUITMENT

10.1 The Charity may use internet searches to perform due diligence on candidates in the course of recruitment or engagement (as the case may be). Where the Charity does this, it will act in accordance with its data protection and equal opportunities obligations.

11. BREACH OF THIS POLICY

11.1 Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action. If the Charity suspects that a breach of this policy has occurred, those affected are required to co-operate with an investigation.

11.2 The Charity may require the removal of any social media content that it considers to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with that request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

12. REVIEWING AND AMENDING THIS POLICY

12.1 This policy will be reviewed by the Charity Trustees at least annually, although the Charity Trustees will monitor any social media issues that take place at the Charity as normal monitoring processes.

12.2 However, this policy will be reviewed by the Charity Trustees sooner if any Charity Commission guidance relating to charities and social media is updated; or an incident of serious nature occurs that highlights the need for revision.

12.3 The Charity Trustees may vary the terms of this policy from time to time.

13.

This policy has been approved for issue by the board of Charity Trustees:

Signature.....(Chair)

Name.....

Date.....

Review date: 01.01.27

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