



Angling Trust

Social Media Policy

Policy and Procedures 2019

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Introduction

Countless conversations take place online about angling and the work that Angling Trust and Fish Legal are involved in every day, and we want our employees to be able to join those conversations, represent our organisations, and share the optimistic and positive spirits of the work we do.

However, using social media can pose risks to our confidential and proprietary information as well as our reputation and can jeopardise our compliance with legal obligations. To minimise these risks you should follow the guidance in this policy.

Who is covered by the policy?

This policy covers all individuals working at Angling Trust and Fish Legal at all levels, including senior managers, directors, employees, consultants, contractors, homeworkers and temporary employees, casual and agency employees (collectively referred to as 'employees' in this policy). Volunteers are also covered if they are communicating on social media in their capacity as an Angling Trust volunteer.

What is covered by the policy?

This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media and other internet postings, including blogs relating to the Angling Trust & Fish Legal, our partners and the work we do. It applies to the use of social media for business and personal purposes, whether during office hours or otherwise.

In certain circumstances we may ask you to remove internet postings which could be damaging to either the Angling Trust and Fish Legal, our funders, commercial partners, sponsors or members.

Compliance with related policies and agreements

Social media should never be used in a way which breaches any of our other policies. Employees should not use social media to:

- breach any of our information security or compliance policies

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- breach HR policies in particular those relating to bullying, harassment and equal opportunities
- defame or disparage the organisation, its affiliates, members, commercial partners, suppliers, or other stakeholders.

Employees who breach any of the above or use social media to bring the Angling Trust & Fish Legal into disrepute may be subject to disciplinary action which is explained in our staff handbook.

Business use of social media

No employee is permitted to register any social media account and act on behalf of Angling Trust and Fish Legal as a brand on any website. Only approved marketing and communications team members may register and use centralised social media accounts for the purpose of publishing our content on social media sites. The Head of Marketing will approve the creation of such accounts, in consultation with the Senior Management Team. **For clarity** – examples of this type of account are our main and regional Angling Trust Facebook pages.

Who can post

Approved messages will be distributed through our central social media accounts controlled by marketing and communications team members.

What we post on central accounts

All new press releases, articles, events, videos, blogs and other new items should be posted on the appropriate social media channels.

Our posts are snippets of news, as such they need to include a hook, be engaging, seek to tell a story, create intrigue, or pose a question based on the key messages of the content. In this way, our messages are transmitted to those seeing the post, even if they do not click on the link.

There is also the potential to use social media channels to comment directly on and leverage posts from our partners and stakeholders and engage in relevant topical conversations.

Posts should be:

- Grammatically correct, informal and succinct
- Relevant to the areas of Angling Trust & Fish Legal's work
- Topical
- Referenced where appropriate
- Punchy, interesting and engaging

Under no circumstances should our social media accounts post content which:

- Is racist, homophobic, sexist or otherwise discriminatory or derogatory
- Personally attacks individuals
- Is irrelevant to the areas of our work

In addition, posts should not be repetitive or uninteresting for our audience, e.g. avoid multiple photos of meetings or people giving presentations!

Retweeting/posting content of others

Retweeting and sharing content posted by others can be a quick way of sharing important information, boosting our profile and helping grow followers. However, articles and other information should be checked before posting to ensure it comes from reputable sources.

Moreover, the same rules as above ('What to post') apply to shares and retweets. Retweeted/reposted content should come from varied sources.

Responding to messages/comments/questions

Social media is by nature discursive and provides a great opportunity to position Angling Trust & Fish Legal in current debates. Those managing social media accounts should monitor these channels regularly. When we receive direct messages, comments on posts, direct tweets or mentions on our central accounts, the organisation should respond quickly, within 24 hours of receiving whenever possible.

In the case of malicious messages, the Head of Marketing should be informed immediately. It may be safer to ignore malicious messages or controversial content posted on our social media channels. Irrelevant content can be hidden or deleted.

Content that is of a racist, homophobic, sexist or otherwise discriminatory or derogatory nature should not be deleted immediately. Rather, it should be immediately referred to the Head of Marketing for assessment. There may be a need to keep a record of the content for investigatory or reporting purposes.

If the decision is made to respond to negative comments and messages, it is important to be professional and polite at all times. Avoid getting into protracted debates. Remember that these debates are public and that we are judged by our conduct as much as by what we say.

Personal use of social media

You may use social media for personal activities at the office or by means of our computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems; however, the level of usage must be reasonable and must not interfere with your day-to-day activities or performance in your role.

We recognise that some people use their personal social media accounts to promote and share content of the work they do at Angling Trust and Fish Legal. We actively encourage you to get online and help spread the word of the work that we do, but use sound judgment, common sense and be conscientious when mixing your business and personal social media posts.

Employees are encouraged to repost/share any content hosted on Angling Trust and Fish Legal's external, public facing websites and social media accounts – as this content will have been reviewed and approved. Employees are not permitted to misrepresent these posts through their own social media account – but we encourage people to add their own comments and descriptions in line with the messaging we have already used and guidance in this policy.

Angling Trust & Fish Legal employees are of course welcome to use their personal accounts as they wish, including posting information about angling and other areas that overlap with our work. If there is an overlap, employees should include a disclaimer on their accounts where appropriate. For example, Twitter accounts could be subtitled with 'These views are purely my own'.

Angling Trust & Fish Legal employees should bear in mind that their personal social media profiles are public and the information they post may still be perceived as Angling Trust & Fish Legal policy. They should not criticise Angling Trust & Fish Legal or any of its funders, donors, partner organisations or members and should not directly undermine Angling Trust & Fish Legal key messages.

Personal posts may also serve to bring Angling Trust & Fish Legal into disrepute, particularly

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if they are of a racist, homophobic, sexist, bullying, trolling, or otherwise discriminatory or derogatory nature. Such posts may be in breach of Angling Trust & Fish Legal Policy and Procedures.

If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from making the communication until you discuss it with a member of the marketing and comms team.

If you receive malicious messages to your personal accounts that are related to your role at Angling Trust & Fish Legal, the Head of Marketing should be informed immediately so that we can support you and deal with any issues quickly.

Social media and work / life balance

We would recommend that you use a second social media account for any AT work you wish to publicise through social media, e.g. Fred Bloggs Angling Trust. This will allow you to keep your personal account (Fred Bloggs) private and link you just to close friends and family. With smartphone apps we would also advocate that these personal AT accounts are only accessed on AT smartphones. **However, we recognise that for those who have been using their personal accounts for some time, this may not be practical.**

In general, we would recommend that Angling Trust and Fish Legal staff who use social media for business purposes, to switch off their device when they stop work and to resist the temptation to respond to enquiries at all hours. Staff should also be conscious of ensuring they have sufficient time off between their working periods.

Brand reputation and crisis management

If you see content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on the Angling Trust and Fish Legal or its stakeholders, or if you see posts that require subject matter expertise, avoid the temptation to respond to these directly unless you respond with approved messaging we have prepared for those topics (e.g. content that has been published on our central accounts and main website). When in doubt you should contact the marketing and comms team for further guidance. Remember, everyone can help with protecting our reputation.

Should we invoke our crisis management policy (see separate policy) we will communicate with all employees at Angling Trust and Fish Legal on our official response. Only information provided in our official response should be used on social media posts. If you have not been briefed, please refrain from responding immediately to any comments or posts on social media channels (or any other form of contact request – e.g. phone / email).

Use of social media in the recruitment process

There should be no systematic or routine checking of prospective employees' online social media activities. This is in line with equal opportunities policy.

Creating and publishing content featuring members and employees

Our social media strategy also permits our marketing and comms team to capture and publish the opinions, views and comments of our people, members, directors and other stakeholders across social media accounts and on behalf of Angling Trust and Fish Legal. At the point of capturing the communication, Angling Trust and Fish Legal will obtain permission to publish the information online by the person who is featured or mentioned. We must trust that the person making the comment is accountable for what they say. Angling Trust and Fish Legal is accountable for ensuring that any of the material that is published through Angling Trust and Fish Legal social media accounts doesn't breach any information security and compliance

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policies.

Our approach to dealing with this is:

- We check that the message is aligned with our strategy, values and brand guidelines
- We ensure that we have the permission for usage from the person featured or mentioned

Monitoring and review of this policy

The Head of Marketing shall be responsible for reviewing this policy to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.

Reviewed: March 2019
Created by: Head of Marketing