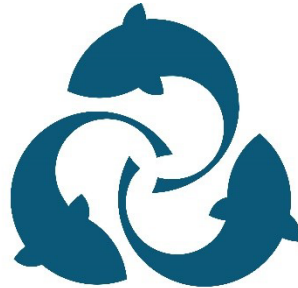


**ANGLING
TRUST**



**FISH
LEGAL**

Angling Trust/ Fish Legal

PD54 Social Media Policy

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1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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 require you to remove internet postings which could be damaging to either the Angling Trust and Fish Legal, our funders, commercial partners, sponsors or members.

4. 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 in any ways that:

- risk breaching any of our information security policies
- risk infringing legal protections e.g. concerning personal information or infringement of copyright.
- breach HR policies in particular those relating to bullying, harassment and equal opportunities
- undermine our organisational values through the use, for example, of obscene or defamatory comments or language and tone that offends taste and decency.
- 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.

5. 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, Communications and Membership will approve the creation of such accounts, in consultation with the Senior Management Team. **For clarity** – This includes but is not exclusive to Angling Trust Facebook pages, Instagram accounts, "X" accounts, YouTube and TikTok accounts. It also includes social media accounts run by our Get Fishing, Competitions and

Fisheries Enforcement Support Service teams.

6. WHO CAN POST?

Approved messages will be distributed through our central social media accounts controlled by marketing and communications team members and those who are given publishing rights to our various accounts by the marketing and communications team.

7. WHAT WE POST ON CENTRAL ACCOUNTS

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

Our posts should be brief, engaging, seek to tell a story, create interest, or pose a question based on the key messages of the content. Where relevant they should be linked to an action or further information on our website.

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 for the Fisheries Enforcement Support Service Facebook account should follow the guidelines produced specifically for posting on that page.

Posts should be:

- Grammatically correct and succinct
- Relevant to the areas of Angling Trust & Fish Legal's work
- Relevant to angling in general
- Topical
- Referenced where appropriate
- Punchy, interesting and engaging
- Include high quality images, properly cropped and colour edited, or video
- The level of formality of the language will depend on the content, however generally an informal but professional tone should be taken.

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
- Infringes copyright outside the recognised terms of "Fair Dealing"

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

Under no circumstances should our social media accounts contravene the Communications Offences outlined in the Online Safety Act 2023, including posting:

- A false communications offence (fake news)
- A threatening communications offence
- An offence of sending/showing flashing images electronically (epilepsy trolling offence)

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

Managing interactions on social media is crucial for maintaining engagement and fostering a positive online community. Users should monitor posts they have published and respond to comments and messages in a timely manner and within 24 hours whenever possible.

Responses should:

Be Personal - address commenters by their names if possible and tailor your responses to their specific inquiries or comments.

Be Positive - maintain a positive tone in your responses, even when addressing criticism or negative feedback. Responding with positivity can help defuse tense situations and demonstrate professionalism.

Be Authentic - be genuine in your responses and avoid canned or robotic replies.

Be Respectful - treat all commenters with respect, even if they express disagreement or criticism. Avoid engaging in heated debates or arguments, as this can escalate quickly and reflect poorly on the Angling Trust. Avoid sarcasm or humour that could be misinterpreted, especially in sensitive situations.

Be Transparent - if you make a mistake or receive criticism, own up to it and offer a transparent response. Honesty and transparency build trust and show that we are accountable for our actions.

Be Engaging - encourage further interaction by asking questions, starting conversations, or prompting users to share their own experiences or opinions.

Pay attention to the tone of your responses and ensure they align with the Angling Trust brand, and always avoid sharing personal information publicly - use direct messaging for more private conversations when necessary.

Responses should be initialled by the person responding to provide a line of contact and ensure those who use accounts with multiple access can see who has responded.

Comments which are baselessly critical of the Angling Trust or Fish Legal, are entirely off topic, irrelevant or repetitive should be hidden (on Facebook) or deleted, depending on the seriousness of the comment. If in doubt, contact the Head of Marketing, Communications and Membership or the Communications Manager for advice.

Comments that are bullying, harassing or are racist, homophobic, sexist or otherwise discriminatory or derogatory must be dealt with immediately. Where possible a screenshot of the comment should be taken and a note made of the details of the person who posted the comment. The comment should then be deleted. The Head of Marketing, Communications and Membership and the Communications Manager (and any other relevant team, e.g. Participation if the comment is on the Get Fishing account etc) should then be informed of the incident and the person who commented may be banned or informed of the reason

their comment was removed. This will also cover any instance where the comment treats someone unfairly for any of these reasons: age, race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, marital status, maternity and pregnancy, gender reassignment or socioeconomic background.

8. 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, however, the level of usage must be reasonable and must not interfere with your day-to-day activities or performance in your role. We cannot allow personal use of social media accounts on mobile phones provided by the business. Employees may use a personal business account on their work phone, but not an entirely personal account. Otherwise, at point of return of the equipment, personal data may be compromised.

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. Employees should not use AT/FL brand logo in personal social media accounts without prior permission from the Head of Marketing and Communications.

Angling Trust & Fish Legal employees, directors and volunteers 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 be clear about what is their own opinion and what is the view of the Angling Trust or Fish Legal. It may be sensible to include a disclaimer where appropriate. For example, X (formerly Twitter) accounts could be subtitled with 'These views are purely my own'.

Bear in mind that your 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 if they are of a racist, homophobic, sexist, bullying, trolling, or otherwise discriminatory or derogatory nature. Such posts are in breach of Angling Trust & Fish Legal Policy and Procedures and may be subject to disciplinary action which is explained in the Staff Handbooks.

If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from making the communication until you discuss it the Head of Marketing, Communications and Membership and/or the Communications Manager.

If you receive malicious messages to your personal accounts that are related to your role at Angling Trust & Fish Legal, please inform your line manger immediately so that we can support you and deal with any issues quickly.

9. 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/FL accounts are only accessed on AT/FL 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.

10. 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 find ourselves in a crisis management situation 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).

11. 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.

12. CREATING AND PUBLISHING CONTENT FEATURING MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES

At times our marketing and comms team may wish 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 policies.

Our approach to dealing with this is:

- We check that the message is aligned with our core values and policy positions.
- We ensure that we have the permission for usage from the person featured or mentioned.

13. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

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

Reviewed: June 2024

By: Head of Marketing, Communications and Membership