



Todmorden Town Council

Social Media & Communications Policy

Created: February 2025

1. Introduction

Todmorden Town Council recognises that the internet provides an opportunity to participate in discussions and share information using social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram and X, as well as communications via email.

The aim of this policy is to provide guidance for Councillors and Council Officers during email communication, and on social media (personal or council Officers/councillor profiles) ensuring activity is safe and appropriate.

Throughout all communications, on social media or via email, Councillors and Council Officers should all remain conscious that they are representing Todmorden Town Council.

2. Social Media

Our Town Councillors and Council Officers alike will likely use social media channels in a private capacity. Employees' and Councillors' use of social media can present risks to our confidential information and reputation as a Council.

When using social media, Councillors and Council Officers should be mindful of what they post, ensuring it remains respectful, balanced and accurate.

They **must not**:

- Present personal opinions as that of Todmorden Town Council.
- Post controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks.
- Engage in personal attacks, online fights or hostile communications.
- Post or share any information regarding personal details of fellow Councillors or Council Officers.
- Post any information that may be deemed libel.
- Post content that is contrary to the democratic decisions of the Council.
- Post any information that infringes copyright of others.
- Share photographs or videos featuring minors, without parental permission.
- Post offensive language relating to race, equality, disability, gender, age, religion or belief.
- Conduct any online activity that constitutes a criminal offence.
- Bring the Council into disrepute, including through content posted in a personal capacity.

Councillors must avoid posting views in advance of a decision to be debated by Todmorden Town Council or a Committee meeting, that may constitute predetermination or bias.

Any interaction on any social media site should not damage their working relationship with other Councillors or Council Officers.

Examples of good practice:

- Be honest and open, but mindful of the impact your content might have on people's perceptions of Todmorden Town Council.
- Don't escalate heated discussions.
- Consider others' privacy and avoid discussing inflammatory topics
- Offer routes to enable resolution of concerns, e.g. how to report to Calderdale Council or other statutory bodies.

It is recommended that Councillors and Council Officers have a separate Council related social media account and they should add "Councillor" or "TTC" as prefix or suffix to their name.

Councillors and Council Officers should familiarise themselves with the safety and security features of their chosen social media channels. Features such as visibility and sharing can be personalised in the privacy settings. For example, on Facebook, there is the option to reduce visibility of your personal details to only be viewed by friends. The Council Officers are on hand to provide any support, if needed, to Councillors who may wish to review their privacy settings.

3. Email

Councillors and Council Officers are provided with a dedicated email address and these are what will be used for all council business.

When using Outlook and the provided Town Council emails, Councillors and Council Officers should take care to use their accounts safely and appropriately.

All email addresses are viewable on the Todmorden Town Council website, and Councillor emails may also be posted into noticeboards.

Todmorden Town Council email accounts are only to be used for matters relating to the Council, and not for personal use. Personal email accounts must not be used for Council related work.

Councillors and Council Officers should take care when forwarding emails, so they do not contain personal or private information that isn't to be shared.

Councillors and Council Officers should remain vigilant when checking emails. Outlook has a well-tuned system for filing spam and scam emails, but any emails containing requests for payments of any kind, or links from a source that you do not recognise should be treated with care. These emails should be deleted, or, if unsure, they should be forwarded to admin@todmorden-tc.gov.uk, where they can be verified as safe or scam.

4. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years (or earlier if required by changes to legislation or additional documentation) and amended as necessary based on good practice or evidence taken forward.