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Social Media Guidance

This guidance sets out how Branches are authorised to use social media and should be read alongside the Constitution and the Branch Rules, particularly section 10. It is designed to:

- Focus our communication on campaigning and key messages
- Protect members, candidates and volunteers
- Protect the interests and reputation of the Party
- Ensure we comply with Party rules, electoral law, and data protection

All online activity should be limited to the platforms and uses set out below.

Platforms permitted for use: Facebook and WhatsApp.

Platforms not permitted for use: Any that are not listed above.

General Principles

1. Authorised accounts only
 - Authorisation from the Regional Director is required to create a social media account. A Social Media Strategy plan must be submitted with the request
 - Personal accounts must not present themselves as speaking for the Party/Branch
 - Only Branch Officers are permitted to administer social media
 - Branch Officers and members must not operate accounts on behalf of elected public officials
2. Purpose of content
 - To highlight campaign activity (Do not disclose locations)
 - Local issues and community concerns
 - National messaging from the Party

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- Positive stories about our candidates, councillors and campaigns

3. Tone and behaviour

- Be respectful, factual, and constructive
- Do not engage in personal attacks, harassment, or defamatory remarks
- Do not engage in arguments with trolls – if in doubt, do not reply

4. Legal and compliance

- Follow Party Rules
- Respect copyright (e.g. images, videos, music, writing, etc.)
- Do not share personal data (names, addresses, contact details) without express consent
- Do not share details of Branch meetings or events
- Follow election imprint rules where required

5. Content approval

- Major announcements, statements on sensitive topics, and anything that could attract press interest should be cleared by the Regional Director and a Press Officer

6. Personal Accounts of Members, Candidates, and Elected Public Officials

- Members and candidates are personally responsible for what they post
- Make clear when they are speaking in a personal capacity
- Assume anything they post could be screenshotted and shared publicly
- Do not attack colleagues, the Party, or make statements that conflict with agreed messaging or rules

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Platform-Specific Guidance

1. Facebook

Accounts permitted:

- Pages only
- Groups are not permitted
- No use of personal profiles or groups for announcements

Purpose:

- Highlight campaigning activity such as images from sessions, events, door-knocking, action days (Do not disclose locations)
- Promote local issues and campaigns
- Share national messaging and official Party content

Restrictions and guidance:

- Use of images containing third parties requires express consent in writing
- Posting and commenting must be disabled for the Page to stop spam and trolling
- Do not use Facebook Messenger for casework or detailed complaints – direct communications to official Party email addresses only
- Do not engage in internal disputes or internal Party business on the Page

2. WhatsApp

Accounts permitted:

- Branch Management Committee group
- Announcement group for activists and candidates (admins posting only)

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Branch Management Committee group:

- For internal coordination, logistics, and urgent updates
- No sharing of sensitive personal data, disciplinary matters, or confidential documents
- Keep discussion focused and relevant; use email for detailed or formal communications

Announcement group for activists and candidates:

- Admins may only post (one-way announcements).
- Use to:
 - Share campaign session times and meeting points
 - Provide key messages and briefing notes

Restrictions and guidance:

- Do not use WhatsApp groups for:
 - Voter contact or canvassing conversations
 - Sharing voter data or canvass returns
 - Discussing complaints or disciplinary issues
- Remember screenshots can be shared; write messages with this in mind



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Breaches of This Guidance

- Concerns about content posted on official accounts should be raised with the Regional Director as soon as possible
- Posts that clearly breach this guidance may be edited, hidden, or removed
- Persistent or serious breaches may be escalated under Party complaints and disciplinary procedures