



TRBC Social Media Policy

A comprehensive guide for social media use for TRBC's channels and for individuals using social media in a personal capacity as a representative of TRBC.

This policy is intended for all staff and volunteers of the charity; this includes employees, consultants, trustees and volunteers. Before engaging in social media activity, you must read this policy, which contains guidance that will help you adhere to our standards.

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Section A - Social Media Policy

1 Policy statement

- 1.1 A comprehensive guide for social media use for TRBC's channels and for individuals using social media in a personal capacity as a representative of TRBC.
- 1.2 This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once every two years.
- 1.3 This policy is intended for all staff and volunteers of the charity; this includes employees, consultants, trustees and volunteers. Before engaging in social media activity, you must read this policy, which contains guidance that will help you adhere to our standards.

Section B - Introduction

2 What is social media?

- 2.1 Social media is the collective term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create, share and interact with content (words, images, graphics and video content), as well as network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media platforms include Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Twitch and TikTok.

3 Why do we use social media

- 3.1 Social media is essential to the success of communicating TRBC's work. It is important for designated staff and volunteers to participate in social media to engage with our audiences and stakeholders, contribute to relevant conversations, and raise the profile of TRBC's work, using the charity's corporate accounts. Some staff and volunteers may also support the charity's work using their personal accounts, and many will have social media accounts for personal use.
- 3.2 Building an engaged online community can lead to more significant long-term support and involvement from supporters. Social media guidance from the Charity Commission (September 2023) conveys how social media can be a highly effective way for a charity to engage its audiences and communicate about its work.

4 Social media helps us to:

- 4.1 Promote our campaigns
- 4.2 Share our news and updates with our audiences
- 4.3 Engage in important conversations with visitors & members
- 4.4 Celebrate our successes
- 4.5 Raise awareness of important issues and challenges
- 4.6 Advertise job and volunteering opportunities
- 4.7 Support our fundraising activities
- 4.8 Increase our membership
- 4.9 Build an online supportive community
- 4.10 Raise our public profile and strengthen our reputation
- 4.11 React to quickly changing situations and topics

5 Why do we need a social media policy?

- 5.1 Social media is a fast-moving online world, where nuance and context can be easily lost. While social media brings the charity to a wide audience, it can also present risks. We want to ensure that all staff and volunteers using social media represent and reflect TRBC in the best way possible. It is also important to mitigate risks (such as reputational or legal issues) associated with the use of social media to protect our supporters, staff and volunteers, work and reputation.
- 5.2 While we encourage the use of social media to support our communications strategy or plans, we have important standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe and adhere to. The difference between a personal and professional opinion can also be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to TRBC's work. Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations and is subject to the same laws as other kinds of publication or commentary in the public domain.
- 5.3 Failure to comply with this policy could expose TRBC to reputational damage as well as putting staff, volunteers, services users and members at risk.

6 Responsibilities and breach of policy

- 6.1 Everyone is responsible for their compliance with this policy.
- 6.2 Participation in social media on behalf of TRBC is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect.
- 6.3 Breaches of policy or inappropriate behaviour may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Staff and volunteers who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach policies should seek advice from the Safeguarding Lead or Pastor (see item 8Section C - 8).

Section C - Setting out the social media policy

7 Application

- 7.1 This policy applies to all social media platforms used by staff (including consultants, and freelancers) and volunteers (including trustees) in a professional and personal capacity.
- 7.2 This policy also applies to online blogs, wikis, podcasts, forums, and messaging based apps, such as WhatsApp. Social media can be accessed in various ways, including from a desktop or laptop computer, tablet or smartphone. This policy applies to the use of all such devices.

8 Point of contact for social media and authority to post on TRBC's social media accounts

- 8.1 Our Administrator is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have questions about any aspect of these channels, please speak to the Administrator. No other staff member or volunteer is permitted to post content on TRBC's official channels without the permission of the Administrator.

- 8.2 Social Media Team: the following individuals form the Social Media Team:

- a) FAITH ALDRIDGE, Administrator
- b) JON WHITE, Pastor
- c) RACHEL WHITE, Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS)
- d) JASPER HARDING, Social Media Trustee

9 Which social media channels do we use?

- 9.1 TRBC uses the following social media channels: Facebook, Instagram and X.
 - a) <https://www.facebook.com/trbchorsham>
 - b) <https://www.instagram.com/trbchorsham>
 - c) <https://x.com/trbchorsham>
- 9.2 TRBC uses its social media to advertise events, content of our Sunday services and sharing news about the life of the church

10 Policy ownership

- 10.1 The Administrator is responsible for authoring and updating this document. The policy must be approved by the trustees and reviewed every two years, unless a significant change requires the organisation to check the policy before the next review date. All staff and volunteers will be notified of updates. Do not download images from the web and assume it will be ok, it almost certainly will not be.

Section D - Rules for use

11 Code of Conduct: Headlines

- 11.1 I will not insult, harass, bully or intimidate individuals or organisations
- 11.2 I will respond to others' opinions respectfully and professionally
- 11.3 I will not do anything that breaches my terms of employment/voluntary role
- 11.4 I will acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly using provided guidance
- 11.5 I will disclose conflicts of interest where I am able
- 11.6 I will not knowingly post inaccurate information
- 11.7 I will link to online references and original source materials directly
- 11.8 I will be considerate, kind and fair
- 11.9 I will always ensure my activity does no harm to the organisation or to others
- 11.10 I will champion TRBC and its services

12 Code of Conduct: Full List

12.1 Know our social media guardians

The Social Media Team is responsible for setting up and managing TRBC's social media channels. Social Media Team has overall ownership of these accounts and only those authorised to do so by the Administrator will have access to these accounts.

The Social Media Team will uphold best practices for channel security with secure passwords that regularly change. Never give out the passwords for our channels without express permission from the Administrator.

12.2 Be an ambassador for our brand

Staff and volunteers must ensure they reflect TRBC's values in what they post and use our tone of voice. Please note only the Social Media Team is permitted to respond to comments on our social media posts on behalf of the organisation. All posts and comments should be attributed to the charity and not an individual. In special cases it may be appropriate for a staff member or volunteer to make an individual comment as themselves, but this should be under the supervision, and with the approval, of the Social Media Team.

12.3 Always pause and think before posting

When posting from TRBC's social media accounts, you must respond to comments in the voice of our charity and not allow your own personal opinions to influence responses. Staff and volunteers must not reveal their personal opinions via our accounts by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'reposting' as TRBC, unless it is clear that you are doing so as an individual staff member or volunteer as part of an approach agreed with the Social Media Team (e.g. as part of a 'takeover' of the charity's account). If you are in doubt about TRBC's position on a particular issue, please speak to the Administrator.

12.4 Ensure brand consistency

Staff or volunteers must not create or manage any other social media channels, groups or pages on behalf of TRBC without training and the express permission from the Social Media Team. This is to ensure brand consistency for users and the appropriate safeguarding and monitoring processes are in place.

12.5 Remember the bigger picture and focus on the benefit

Staff and volunteers must make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for TRBC to further our charitable purposes (either directly or indirectly, by engaging stakeholders and building our brand using our strategy).

12.6 Bring value to our audience(s)

Those responsible for the management of our social media accounts should answer questions as swiftly as possible to help and engage with our service users and supporters.

12.7 Seek permission to share

If staff or volunteers outside of the Social Media Team wish to contribute content for social media, whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, they should obtain guidance and permission from the Administrator or the Social Media Team.

12.8 Obtain consent

Staff and volunteers must not post content about supporters, service users or partners without their, or their guardian's, express permission. If staff or and volunteers are sharing information about supporters, service users or third party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from TRBC. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, staff and volunteers must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.

12.9 Put safety first

It can be challenging working on social media and there may be times where staff or volunteers could be subject to unpleasant or abusive comments directed at the charity, our work or people. We encourage everyone who is on social media on behalf of the charity to be aware of our safeguarding and wellbeing practices to deal with online abuse and consult with the Social Media Team where necessary.

It is also vital that TRBC does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials in pursuit of social media engagement. For example, a video of a stunt or visiting an unsafe location.

12.10 Stick to the law

Staff and volunteers must not encourage people to break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material. Some examples of relevant laws:

- a) UK GDPR rules on publishing personal information or data – the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) provides guidance and resources
- b) privacy (misusing private information or intruding on a person's right to privacy) - one should consider privacy laws and make sure one has consent, where this is required
- c) copyright law - if one is using images or artwork on social media. The Intellectual Property Office provides guidance on the use of digital images and photography
- d) defamation law
- e) whistleblower protection
- f) equality and human rights including discrimination, victimisation, harassment, and freedom of expression

12.11 Remain politically neutral

TRBC is not associated with any political organisation or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We can express views where appropriate on policies that impact our work and service users, but it is essential that TRBC remains, and is seen to be, politically neutral.

We cannot endorse a political party or candidate. We must carefully manage the risk that we are perceived to have any party-political bias and should carefully consider any posts which might be perceived as such, for example, posts which talk about individual politicians or parties rather than policies.

12.12 Check facts and be honest

Staff and volunteers should not automatically assume that material that's shared or included in any post is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification – for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it. But think first about how to manage any risk to the charity and its brand in doing so by consulting with [job titles or team name] to craft the response.

12.13 Seek advice for complaints

If a complaint is made on TRBC's social media channels, staff and volunteers should seek advice from the Administrator before responding. If they are not available, then staff and volunteers should speak to the Pastor.

12.14 Know what to do in a crisis

Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the charity's reputation. Examples might include incorrect statements posted by staff (or volunteers) or misinformation around a current issue.

The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity or our people. The Social Media Team regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of TRBC so we can catch any issues or problems early.

If any staff or volunteers outside of the Social Media Team becomes aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on TRBC's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the Administrator or Pastor immediately. It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to report complaints or comments that could escalate into a crisis or have serious implications for the charity. Only the Administrator or Pastor is permitted to amend or delete content in a crisis.

12.15 Use AI appropriately

AI can be a valuable tool that can support our communications activities. You must seek permission from the Social Media Team before using AI and only use approved AI tools and processes.

12.16 Handover ownership if your role changes

You must hand over ownership of the group/page/account you manage to another appropriate staff member (or volunteer) if you change roles or if you leave TRBC.

13 Use of personal social media accounts – appropriate conduct

13.1 Personal social media use by staff and volunteers can sometimes be attributed to the charity or bring other risks for the charity or individual staff or volunteers. This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media, but instead flags up those areas in which risks or conflicts might arise. TRBC staff and volunteers are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are considerate of TRBC's values and policies, both online and in real life.

13.2 You will find more information on your responsibilities when using our computer systems in our TRBC IT Policy.

13.3 Separate your personal views

Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive TRBC. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of TRBC. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about TRBC's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "Views are my own" or "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent TRBC's positions, policies or opinions."

Section E - Version control

Version	Comment	Date	Approved by
v0.1	First draft of TRBC Social Media Policy	21/7/2020	
v0.2	Second draft	06/01/2025	
v0.3	Peer review of second draft	16/01/2025	
v0.4	Reworked to match Charity Commission Template	13/05/2025	
v0.5	Abridged to cut out unnecessary sections	20/05/2025	
v1.0	Approved	20/05/2025	Trustees