

Selsey Community Forum



Communications Policy

Aim

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework for communications which will allow Selsey Community Forum to:

- ◆ Achieve its mission.
- ◆ Raise awareness of Selsey Community Forum and what it does.
- ◆ Engage effectively with its target audiences.
- ◆ Demonstrate the success of its work.
- ◆ Deal effectively with partners and other organisations.

Communications

There are two target audiences for Selsey Community Forum communications:

- ◆ **External:** The local community, both in Selsey and the wider Manhood Peninsula, as well as statutory organisations, partners, potential partners and funders.
- ◆ **Internal:** Selsey Community Forum trustees, staff and volunteers.

A number of regular or occasional means of communications will normally be utilised:

- ◆ Website.
- ◆ Various Newsletters.
- ◆ Occasional articles and press releases for publication in local media.
- ◆ Occasional interviews on local radio.
- ◆ Social media.
- ◆ YouTube.
- ◆ Promotional leaflets for individual Selsey Community Forum services.
- ◆ Publicity material displayed in the Selsey Care Shop.
- ◆ Internal and external correspondence, both letters and emails.
- ◆ Reports for Trustees.
- ◆ Minutes or notes of meetings.
- ◆ Events.

Responsibilities

In order to ensure the coherence and quality of communications released by Selsey Community Forum to its target audiences, all Trustees and staff and any volunteers producing communications for either internal or external audiences should be made aware of this policy. Where it exists, suitable material from reports, briefs and performance indicators that are produced as part of Selsey Community Forum's operations, should be used as source documents. To promote efficiency and reduce effort as far as reasonably possible, material should be suitable for using directly in as many channels as reasonably possible. Articles should be produced so that they can directly or, at least, with little amendment, be reproduced for different mediums. An individual should be appointed to be responsible for the content of the Selsey Community Forum's website, social media pages and YouTube.

When producing any form of communication, all Selsey Community Forum Trustees, staff

and volunteers should be informed by the following guidance and meet the subsequent requirements, particularly those related to social media.

Guidance

To present a consistent image, communications with both external and internal audiences should be of equal standard over all mediums and there should be no contradiction between different mediums. All communications, including internal emails, reports and notes of meetings should:

- ◆ Use plain, simple English with short sentences and paragraphs.
- ◆ Avoid the use of acronyms.
- ◆ Be relevant, factually correct, sensitive and timely.
- ◆ Enable meaningful engagement with partners and other external organisations.
- ◆ Recognise the importance and value of engaging with Trustees, staff, volunteers and service users.
- ◆ Ensure that Selsey Community Forum listens to service users, acts on information received when appropriate and provides feedback.
- ◆ Reflect the principles of confidentiality, data protection and other relevant legislation.
- ◆ Where practical, be accessible by those with disability, impairment or sensory loss.

Requirements

All communications intended for the external audience (including emails) should bear the Selsey Community Forum logo and, where appropriate, utilise the 'corporate' colours of blue and green. Personnel producing articles and other material intended for external audiences should clear them with the Communications Team before publication.

The Press and Other Media.

Selsey Community Forum welcomes enquiries from the press and media and recognises that a good relationship with the press helps effective communication with the community. Equally, Selsey Community Forum recognises that taking a proactive approach to communication ensures information is made available to the community in a timely manner and is accessible via as many media sources as possible, including social media platforms.

- ◆ Enquiries received from national media should be directed to the Trustees' Chair.
- ◆ Enquiries from local media can be dealt with by a trustee or staff member who might, in turn, refer the matter to the Trustees' Chair.

Social Media.

Social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp can bring significant benefits to Selsey Community Forum, particularly for building relationships with the external audience and communicating with the internal audience. However, the use of social media requires safeguards; where appropriate, the following applies to Trustees, staff and volunteers:

- ◆ Personal social media accounts are not to be used by staff during working hours or using Selsey Community Forum's PCs or laptops. The charity reserves the right to monitor how social networks are used and accessed through IT and internet connections.
- ◆ The Trustees are to approve in advance any new Selsey Community Forum page on any social media platform or other forum.
- ◆ Social Media posts that could bring the charity into disrepute are to be avoided.
- ◆ The charity, its Trustees, staff and volunteers, service users or external partner

- organisations are not to be defamed.
- ◆ Confidentiality, particularly in relation to Trustees, staff, volunteers and service users must be upheld.
 - ◆ Photographs or images of individuals are not to be posted without their express permission.
 - ◆ Social media accounts should be protected by strong passwords that are changed regularly and shared only with authorised users.
 - ◆ The Communications Team can remove any social media post from a Selsey Community Forum page on any forum that they consider to be inappropriate.
 - ◆ Advice on using social media sites is at the Attachment to this policy.

Emails.

All email communication by staff and related to the charity's business is to be sent through a Selsey Community Forum email address; it is preferable for Trustees to do the same. An individual should be appointed to be responsible for issuing and administering Selsey Community Forum email addresses.

Copyright.

Selsey Community Forum respects and operates within copyright laws.

- ◆ No copyrighted material owned by third parties is to be published in any Selsey Community Forum communication unless permitted in writing by that third party.
- ◆ Where appropriate, credit for text and photos is to be given.
- ◆ Material from websites can be used if the website has sharing buttons or functions.

Events.

Where reasonably possible, suitable banners and marketing materials should be made available for use at events and activities involving Selsey Community Forum.

Other Matters

All staff and volunteers are to be provided with appropriate induction training and a handbook providing information and guidance on Selsey Community Forum's Communications Policy. This policy should be read in conjunction with Selsey Community Forum's Data Protection and Equal Opportunities Policies, together with Selsey Community Forum's Communications Plan.

Attachment: Advice on Using Social Media

Reviewed and Approved by Trustees: October 2023

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Mike Nicholls, Chair, Selsey Community Forum

Attachment to:

Selsey Community Forum

Communications Policy



Advice on Using Social Media

Regardless of which social networks you are using, or whether you are using business or personal accounts, following these simple rules helps avoid the most common pitfalls:

- ◆ **Know the social network.** You should spend time becoming familiar with the social network before contributing. It is important to read any FAQs and understand what is and is not acceptable on a network before posting messages or updates.
- ◆ **If unsure, do not post it.** You should err on the side of caution when posting to social networks. If you feel an update or message might cause complaints or offence, or be otherwise unsuitable, you should not post it.
- ◆ **Be thoughtful and polite.** You should adopt the same level of courtesy used when communicating via email or face-to-face conversations.
- ◆ **Don't make promises without checking.** Some social networks are very public, so you should not make any commitments or promises on behalf of Selsey Community Forum without checking that the charity can deliver on the promises.
- ◆ **Handle complex queries via other channels.** Social networks are not a good place to resolve complicated enquiries and service user issues.
- ◆ **Don't escalate things.** It is easy to post a quick response to a contentious status update and then regret it. You should always take the time to think before responding and hold back if they are in any doubt at all. Take the discussion off-line out of the public domain.
- ◆ **Look out for security threats.** You should be on guard for social engineering and phishing attempts where scammers attempt to use deception to obtain information.
 - Be aware also, that social networks are used to distribute spam and malware.
 - Avoid clicking links in posts, updates and direct messages that look suspicious.

Social media accounts can be used for many different purposes. In general, you should only post updates and messages or otherwise use these accounts when that use is clearly in line with Selsey Community Forum's overall objectives. For instance, staff may use the charity's social media accounts to:

- ◆ Respond to customer enquiries and requests for help.
- ◆ Share blog posts, articles and other content created by Selsey Community Forum.
- ◆ Share insightful articles, videos, media and other content relevant to the service.
- ◆ Provide followers with an insight into what goes on at Selsey Community Forum.
- ◆ Support new project launches and other initiatives.
- ◆ Listen to and participate in conversations.
- ◆ If necessary, ensure it is clear that your private social media account does not represent Selsey Community Forum's views or opinions.

In order to be a safe, responsible social media user, you must not:

- ◆ Post messages, status updates or links to material or content that is inappropriate: pornography, racial or religious slurs, gender-specific comments, information encouraging criminal skills or terrorism, or materials relating to cults, gambling and

illegal drugs. Inappropriate content also covers any text, images or other media that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law.

- ◆ Post, upload, forward or link to spam, junk email or chain emails and messages.
- ◆ Share links to illegal copies of music, films, games or other software.
- ◆ Use social media for any illegal or criminal activities.
- ◆ Broadcast unsolicited views on social, political, religious or other non-business related matters.
- ◆ Discuss colleagues, service users or partners without their approval.
- ◆ Share or link to any content or information that could be considered confidential.

It is important to maintain confidentiality and you should be aware of the security and data protection issues that can arise from using social media.