Runnymede Borough Council

New Member Induction-
Social Media

Mario Leo

Corporate Head Of Law And Governance

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What is Social Media?

'The collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content sharing and collaboration.'

'websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking'

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Use of Social Media

To be an effective councillor you won't stop meeting people and posting leaflets simply because you are posting online. You will know your residents best — consider which channel works best for them to connect with you, online and offline.

So social media is merely another tool in your toolkit to communicate with your electorate. Has rules which apply to its use.

Use of Social Media

From experience, many elected members say that Friday and Saturday nights are not always the best time to post overtly political messages. You won't always get the most rounded debates. Many councillors post sparingly on religious holidays.

In the same way you might not post leaflets on a religious holiday you should not post at times when people will not appreciate it or react negatively for various reasons.

Why is Social Media Important?

- It's free and easy to use
- It's immediate & effective
- It's a two-way street
- It provides real connections
- Everybody's doing it

Notes of Caution

- Libel
- Copyright
- Data protection
- Bias & predetermination
- Obscene Material
- Electoral periods
- Your Council's legal position

Councillor or Private Person?

Whilst you may have been elected a Councillor you had a life and interests before taking that office which still exist.

Keep those lives separate on social media.

You may be interested in things and want to express your views. The electorate may not be interested or not share your views.

Don't blur social media identities Keep your profiles separate

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The Code of Conduct

- No bullying
- No intimidation
- No compromising impartiality of the Council
- Confidential Information
- Avoid disreputable behaviour
- No improper (dis)advantage
- Listen to Advice

The Nolan principles

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

Netiquette' & Avoiding Gaffes

- Impressions – clarity
- Disagreements are OK
- Think before you publish!
- Beware the irony
- Don't be creepy
- Own Up
- Avoid the Trolls

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The Golden Rules

- If you wouldn't say it to someone's face, don't say it online

- Don't rely on privacy settings

The Golden Rules (cont.)

- Don't have a row - Robust debate is fine from time-to-time and it's part of the cut and thrust of local politics. Most people can accept that.

- But remember how this debate is playing out to passers-by who are not interested in the detail of the issue

The Golden Rules (cont.)

- An absolute 'no no' is abusing people online.
  It doesn't work.

- It will make you look awful and is a sure-fire way to land you in trouble with your electorate, the party and the council. Be professional.

- Don't say anything you wouldn't be happy saying in a public meeting with the Press there.

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The Golden Rules (cont.)

- Always be sure you understand how to use the privacy settings on the platform you are using – when in doubt ask someone with technical knowledge

The Golden Rules (cont.)

- Remember friendships don't always last forever and when they turn it can be a painful experience:

Julius Caesar and Marcus Junius Brutus

Politicians and ghost writers

Some further points to remember

- Use a sensible name
- Don't link without good reason
- 'Private' setting doesn't necessarily mean it is
- Remember - security matters
- Don't share anything that reflects badly on you

Advice to the Twitterati

- Brevity can be inadequate and misinterpreted
- Don't Tweet at the peak of your emotions
- Be careful with your choice of hashtag
- If in doubt, don't post
- Be optimistic
- Think of the potential impact of your post

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Techy Stuff - Digital Footprints

- Data Trail – "We know who you are, where you are and where you've been"

- Decide who sees your posts

- Don't share personal details

- Check privacy settings regularly

Conduct at Meetings

- Use devices sparingly
- Appearances in meetings are important and can mislead
- Never at quasi-judicial meetings (Planning, Licensing etc.)
- Pay attention.
- Don't play games

Social Media

Any questions?