

# **Towcester Choral Society Social Media Policy**

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 Social media is the term for internet based tools used for publishing, sharing and discussing information. This includes blogs, and social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Myspace and LinkedIn etc.

1.2 There has been growth in the use of these tools in recent years. They have many positive benefits and are a great way of keeping in touch with people. However there are also risks.

1.3 Comments posted on these sites can be seen by a number of people and in some circumstances can be damaging to the reputation of the choir, its members and Trustees. This policy serves to remind members and trustees that they have a duty not to bring the organisation into disrepute - any social media posting should be carefully considered before posting.

1.4 All of us should remember that inappropriate posting on social media may also result in claims of bullying or harassment or break rules of data protection and confidentiality.

## **2. Scope**

This policy covers Towcester Choral Society; its members and trustees (i.e. committee) and is designed to help minimise the risks associated with the use of social media.

## **3. General Principles/Risks**

3.1 Towcester Choral Society recognises that members use and enjoy social media in a private capacity and in a responsible manner. Towcester Choral Society is not trying to interfere with this. However, the use of this media can have a potential impact on the public perception of Towcester Choral Society.

3.2 Defamatory comments - anything against the organisation that serves to undermine the reputation of the organisation in the eyes of society. Photographs or cartoons are also capable of being defamatory if they falsely reference the organisation in a way which may bring discredit.

3.3 Libellous comments – anything in permanent (i.e. written) form that clearly identifies the organisation (directly or by inferring), and the meaning of the statement is such that, in their natural and ordinary sense, the words are capable of damaging the organisation's reputation.

3.4 Breaching confidentiality – disclosure of confidential information about the organisation, customers, or a fellow member may amount to a breach of confidence and publication of private personal information is prohibited.

3.5 Derogatory comments – may not be unlawful or untrue but nonetheless have the possibility of bringing the organisation into disrepute.

3.6 Breaching Privacy – where, for example, a member posts a personal comment about a fellow member on a social networking site without permission.

3.7 Cyber Bullying – when a person or group uses the internet, a mobile phone or other digital technology to threaten, tease or abuse someone.

## **4. Specific policies and procedures**

4.1 Towcester Choral Society supports the use of social media to celebrate success. However, members must not use social media to make critical, unfounded, derogatory or misrepresented comments about Towcester Choral Society, its members and/or trustees. Each member has a duty not to bring the organisation into disrepute and careful consideration of content should be given when posting on social media.

4.2 Only members who have been given direct permission by the trustees may speak to the media or use Towcester Choral Society social media on behalf of the organisation.

4.3 All members have a duty not to bring the organisation into disrepute. The use of social networking or media sites to comment about or post member or trustee information is unacceptable and potentially illegal. The use of confidential or copyrighted material may also have legal consequences.

4.4 Being linked to fellow members as 'friends' is acceptable, however, it is inappropriate to make any comment to or about a member (or members), which could be considered as a form of bullying, harassment or discrimination of any kind. This applies to any comment posted, even if it does not mention Towcester Choral Society.

4.5 The use of any recording device including cameras, videos, mobile phones, iPads is forbidden unless specific permission has been granted in advance and then only for an agreed purpose. Any information published on social networking sites is considered to be in the public domain.

4.6 Remember that anything the member posts to external sites will be published worldwide immediately and is permanently available and could be republished in other media.

4.7 Members must recognise that electronic communication must be treated the same as any other means of written communication, and they are responsible for its content.

4.8 Failure to observe the requirements of this policy will result in the instigation of an investigation under disciplinary or grievance codes or any other relevant policy. If an investigation finds that postings fall within any of the unacceptable behaviours detailed above the organisation will request that the comments be removed or retracted and the member will be subject to action that may include dismissal from Towcester Choral Society.

## **5. Roles and responsibilities**

### Members

It is the responsibility of the members to conform to this policy and address with the trustees any concerns or questions with regard to its application.

### Trustees

It is the responsibility of the trustees to ensure members are aware of the policy and to address any issues that may arise with the use of any form of social media.