



Godalming & Villages Community Store

providing food and household supplies for those in need

Social Media Policy

Social media is a powerful tool that lets us connect with our supporters. We use it to share information about our services, inspire you with stories of our work, and raise awareness about food poverty in our community. This policy outlines the guidelines we follow to ensure our online presence reflects our values and mission. It applies to everyone who represents us online, including volunteers and trustees.

Our Platforms

Godalming and Villages Community Store (GVCS) currently has a website and accounts on Facebook and Instagram. Creating new accounts or adding features to existing ones requires committee approval.

Who Manages Our Accounts?

Dedicated volunteers, the "Social Media Team," manage our official online platforms. They've received training on social media best practices and keep our website and social media presence running smoothly. This includes monitoring comments and messages, creating content, and publishing posts. Trustees oversee their work. Only the Social Media Team has access to account logins, and passwords are changed regularly for security. When a team member leaves, their access is revoked across all platforms.

What We Share

All content on our website and social media accounts aligns with GVCS's mission and activities. Here's what we keep in mind:

- **Accuracy & Trust:** We strive for accurate and reliable information. We fact-check everything and cite sources when needed. We avoid misleading content and follow Charity Commission guidelines, which means no religious debates, political statements, or advocating for specific parties or candidates.
- **Respect & Kindness:** We treat everyone with dignity and respect, regardless of background, beliefs, or opinions. We comply with GDPR by not sharing personal information without consent. We avoid identifying clients without their permission and maintain a positive and inclusive online environment free of discrimination, hate speech, harassment, or offensive content. This includes being thoughtful about images and hashtags used in posts.
- **Copyright:** We follow copyright laws. We only use content we have the rights to, have permission for, or is licensed under Creative Commons.

Creating & Approving Content

The Social Media Team create social media content. Before publishing any content (including the Urgent List or thank-you posts) they will have it double-checked for accuracy and reviewed by the source (e.g., the Urgent List team, person providing photos). This helps ensure completeness and correctness. Client privacy and Store security will also be a priority. For example, photos taken in or around the Store shouldn't show clients nor sensitive information.

Responding to comments and queries

During operating hours, we monitor comments and messages on our platforms. We aim to:

- **Respond politely and respectfully.**
- **Avoid inflammatory language, personal attacks, and negativity.**
- **Direct people to relevant information on our website if needed.**
- **Discuss the most appropriate response with a Trustee before responding to criticism.**
- **Respond only as necessary to comments or tags.**
- **Encourage constructive dialogue but reserve the right to remove content that violates this policy or is deemed harmful, inappropriate, unlawful, or offensive.**
- **Explain why we remove content and strive to respond promptly to reported violations. The Social Media Team and relevant Trustees will be informed of any content removal.**

Branding & Representation

- **Consistent Look:** Our social media accounts use the same branding as our website, logo, and other materials for a consistent look across platforms.
- **Who Speaks for Us?:** Only designated individuals can speak for GVCS online. Volunteers can share, like, or comment on existing content but cannot make official statements.
- **Following & Liking:** We aren't obligated to follow or like every account that follows us. If we do like, follow, or comment on someone else's post, it doesn't mean we endorse them. We may follow accounts that share our goals, support our work, or promote similar values like helping those in poverty, reducing food waste, and community collaboration.

Endorsements, Partnerships & Donations

- **Disclosures:** If we endorse a product, service, or organization, we'll clearly disclose any sponsorship, partnership, or compensation involved.
- **Responsible Sponsorships:** We'll be careful about accepting sponsorships to ensure they align with our mission and values.
- **Third-party Fundraising:** If someone claims online to be raising funds for us, a trustee will investigate and determine the appropriate response.
- **Donations:** Donations aren't eligible for acknowledgement on social media until we confirm receipt (financial donations by the charity treasurer). Not all donations will be acknowledged using social media. Those that are will be

acknowledged anonymously, unless the donor gives us permission to use their name.

Crisis Management

In an emergency, we may use social media to share updates, important information, and seek support. A designated Trustee will manage communication, ensuring accuracy and offering guidance to the Social Media Team.

Training & Monitoring

The Social Media Team and anyone else using social media on behalf of GVCS will receive training on social media policies and best practices. We regularly review and monitor our social media platforms to ensure compliance and identify opportunities for improvement.

Complaints Procedure

If you believe someone is violating this policy or have a complaint about our social media activity, please report it to us as soon as possible using the contact information available on our website. A trustee will review the complaint and discuss it with the committee to determine the appropriate response.

Responsible Social Media Use

We encourage everyone to use social media responsibly and be mindful of their online activity and its potential impact on GVCS.

Thank You!

By following these steps, we can ensure our social media presence remains a valuable asset for GVCS, helping us connect with the community, raise awareness of our cause, and ultimately, achieve our mission.

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