Social Media Policy

BowlsWales · BowlsCymru

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Owner	Chief Executive

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1. Introduction

Social media is a term used to describe user participation and user-generated content via websites and applications. It encompasses six broad forms: blogs, wikis, social networks, forums, podcasts, and content communities.

Social media offers the opportunity for people to gather in online communities of shared interest and to create, share or consume content. BowlsWales recognises the benefits of social media as an important tool of engagement and enrichment for our members, stakeholders and the wider public.

Where someone clearly identifies their links with BowlsWales and/or discusses their involvement in the organisation in any such forum, they are expected to behave and express themselves appropriately and in ways that are consistent with BowlsWales's values and policies.

This policy provides guiding principles for the use of social media. It does not apply to purely personal use of social media platforms that makes no reference to BowlsWales or related sport issues.

BowlsWales recognises the legal rights of employees in their use of social media in a private capacity outside work. However, any actions relating to social media — in or outside of work — that can impact the performance of yourself, others, or the interests of BowlsWales are subject to this policy.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals working with or on behalf of BowlsWales, including Board Directors, employees, sub-group members, volunteers, contractors, consultants, and temporary or part-time workers.

3. Using Social Media Outside Work

The personal image you project on social media may adversely reflect on the image of BowlsWales. We recommend you:

- Show yourself in your best light. By identifying yourself as an employee of BowlsWales within a social network, you are connected to colleagues, managers, and stakeholders. Ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at BowlsWales.
- Think twice. Exercise good judgement and professionalism in all personal communications on social media. If you would not write something in an email, on BowlsWales headed paper, or out loud in a public setting, do not post it online. Social media platforms are public forums and should be treated as such.
- Use a disclaimer. When using social media for personal purposes, do not imply you are speaking for BowlsWales. Avoid use of BowlsWales email addresses, logos, or other identifying marks. Make clear that what you say represents your personal views only. Where possible, include a standard disclaimer such as: "Statements and opinions here are my own and not those of my employer."
- Know your obligations. You must comply with other organisational policies when using social media. Take care not to breach confidentiality or data protection policies.
- Show respect to all. Be respectful of BowlsWales and your fellow employees and volunteers.

4. Using Social Media for Communication at Work

If used with due care, social media can be of real benefit to BowlsWales. A LinkedIn profile highlights the expertise of our people; platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and X can help generate enthusiasm for and awareness of our work. Each tool and medium has proper and inappropriate uses.

BowlsWales encourages all employees to share BowlsWales content and positively promote items about your work. This helps to build the profile of our organisation. However, it is important to understand what is recommended, expected, and required when you discuss BowlsWales-related topics.

BowlsWales expects you to exercise personal responsibility whenever you participate in social media. This includes not breaching the trust of those with whom you are engaging, presenting accurate information, and ensuring audiences are not misled.

This policy covers all forms of social media including, but not limited to:

- Maintaining a profile page on social or business networking sites (such as LinkedIn, Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, or any other);
- Content sharing, including any platform involving photo, video, or audio sharing;
- Commenting on blogs for personal or business reasons;
- Leaving product or service reviews on retailer or customer review sites;
- Taking part in online votes and polls;
- Taking part in conversations on public and private web forums, message boards, or group messaging applications such as WhatsApp.

The intent of this policy is to include anything posted online where information is shared that might affect members, stakeholders, sponsors, or BowlsWales as an organisation and the reputation of the sport in general.

5. Guidance to Employees and Volunteers

You should:

- Not set up any social media platforms or feeds as an account of BowlsWales unless instructed to do so as part of your work.
- Abide by the IT Usage, BowlsWales Code of Conduct, and the Data Protection policies.
- Seek advice if in doubt. If you have any uncertainty about publishing something online and this policy does not resolve it, hold back and seek the advice of your manager.
- Declare yourself. BowlsWales believes in transparency and honesty. Use your real name, be clear who you are, and identify where you work. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, make this clear. What you publish will be around for a long time — consider content carefully and be sensible about disclosing personal details.
- Follow copyright and data protection laws. It is critical that you stay within the legal framework. Libel, defamation, copyright, and data protection laws apply. Ask permission to publish or report on conversations that are private or internal to BowlsWales.
- Add value. BowlsWales' reputation is shaped in large part by the behaviour of its staff and everything you publish reflects on how we are perceived. Use social media in a way that adds value to our organisation.
- Do not be defensive. When you see inaccuracies about BowlsWales articulated by partners, journalists or other online sources, you may use social media politely and sensitively to point out the position as you see it. Also advise your line manager that you have identified potentially inaccurate or reputationally damaging information.
- Be prepared for a two-way conversation. Be aware that people are entitled to their views. Make sure what you say is factual and avoid unnecessary or unproductive arguments.

- Handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity. If a conversation becomes offensive in terms of language or sentiment, inform your audience why you have removed the comment. A brief explanation is sufficient, for example: "This comment was removed because moderators found the content offensive. I will respond to your comments, but please respect the views of all participants."
- React to your own mistakes. If you make a mistake, be up front about your error and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make clear that you have done so. Remember that there are consequences to what you publish.
- Do not forget the day job. Your online activities must not interfere with your job or bring BowlsWales into disrepute.

6. BowlsWales Protocol for Social Media Use

If you already use social networks or blogs for personal use and you have indicated in any way that you work for BowlsWales, you should add a disclaimer stating that opinions on that account are your own.

If your actions are considered to bring the organisation into disrepute, or breach any aspect of this or associated policies, you may be subject to action under BowlsWales' Disciplinary Policy. If you break the law using social media — for example, by posting something defamatory — you will be personally responsible.

You must adhere to the following principles:

- All information created as part of your job role constitutes a record of BowlsWales, is evidence of BowlsWales' work, and may be needed for reference by others in future.
- All information is subject to a retention period specifying how long it must be kept.

Any use of social media (whether or not accessed for work purposes) may be monitored and, where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken under BowlsWales' Disciplinary Procedure. If you notice any use of social media by other members of staff in breach of this policy, please report it to the Chief Executive.

For BowlsWales Directors, employees, and sub-group members, use of social media must not:

- Contain, or link to, libellous, defamatory, or harassing information;
- Comment on, or publish information that is confidential in any way;
- Bring the organisation or the sport into disrepute; or
- Otherwise be in breach of the BowlsWales Code of Conduct.

Branding and Intellectual Property

Only BowlsWales' official social media accounts and website(s) have the right to use any logo or trademark belonging to the organisation. Any use of BowlsWales logos or trademarks in personal social media applications will constitute a breach of this policy.

7. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

AI tools — such as text generators, image creators, and chatbots — are increasingly used to support content creation for social media. BowlsWales recognises that these tools can offer genuine efficiency benefits, and does not prohibit their use. However, all use of AI in relation to BowlsWales' social media must be handled responsibly and in accordance with this policy.

When using AI tools to create or assist with content for BowlsWales' social media channels, you must:

- Review and verify all AI-generated content before publishing. AI tools can produce inaccurate, misleading, or inappropriate output. You remain personally responsible for everything published under your name or on behalf of BowlsWales.
- Not input confidential, personal, or sensitive information into AI tools. This includes information about members, athletes, staff, partners, or any data subject to BowlsWales' data protection obligations.
- Ensure AI-generated content does not infringe copyright or intellectual property rights. Text, images, and other media produced by AI tools may carry legal risks if used without appropriate checks.
- Be transparent where required. Do not present AI-generated content in a way that is intentionally misleading about its origin, particularly in contexts where authenticity matters, such as athlete quotes or official statements.
- Apply the same standards as all other content. AI-generated content is subject to all other provisions of this policy, including requirements around accuracy, respect, brand consistency, and data protection.

Only individuals authorised by the Chief Executive may use AI tools to create or schedule content on BowlsWales' official social media accounts. Any concerns about AI-generated content should be raised with the Chief Executive.

8. Breach of Policy

Detected breaches of this policy should be reported to the BowlsWales Chair or Chief Executive.

A breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action under the BowlsWales governing documents, including its Articles of Association, Disciplinary Regulations, and other relevant policies.

9. Review

BowlsWales reserves the right to amend and/or withdraw this policy from time to time, including to take account of changes in the law, best practice, and operational requirements.

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Appendix: Employee Guidance on the Use of Social Media

The following additional guidance applies specifically to employees:

- Be mindful that any online activities or comments made in a public domain must be compatible with your position within BowlsWales and safeguard your professional reputation.
- Protect your own privacy. Ensure that your social network privacy settings are set correctly so that your account does not compromise your professional position.
- Comments made outside work via social media do not remain private and can have work-related implications. Comments you intend to be "private" may still be in contravention of the Harassment and Bullying Policy and/or the Disciplinary Policy. Once something is online, it can be copied and redistributed. Presume everything you post is permanent and can be shared.
- Do not discuss work-related issues online, including conversations about members, participants, complaints, management, or disparaging remarks about colleagues or BowlsWales. Even when anonymised, these are likely to be inappropriate.
- Do not under any circumstances accept connection requests or follow requests from members or participants where doing so may conflict with your employment or professional obligations.
- Be aware that other users may access your profile. If they find information or images offensive, they may make a complaint to BowlsWales.
- Ensure that any comments or images cannot be deemed defamatory, libellous, or in breach of copyright legislation.
- When setting up your profile, consider whether it is appropriate and prudent to include a photograph, or to provide occupation, employer, or work location details.
- You can take action if you find yourself the target of complaints or abuse on social networking sites. Most sites include mechanisms to report abusive activity and provide support for users subject to abuse by others.
- If you find inappropriate references or images of you posted by others, contact them and the site to have the material removed.
- If you are concerned about someone else's behaviour online, take steps to raise your concerns. If work-related, inform your manager.
- Employees should not access social media sites, or leave them running in the background, during working time for personal use on any devices within their control.