



The City of Lichfield Concert Band

Social Media Policy

Last updated and approved by Trustees October 2024

This is intended as a comprehensive guide for social media use for City of Lichfield Concert Band's (COLCB) channels and for individuals using social media in a personal capacity as a representative of the band.

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and presented annually to the Band AGM. The trustees of the COLCB will amend this policy, following consultations with members where appropriate.

This policy is intended for all members of the Band, members and employees (whether employees or freelancers), and volunteers and anyone working on behalf of COLCB or taking part in COLCB activities. Before engaging in social media activity, you must read this policy, which contains guidance that will help you adhere to our standards.

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Introduction

What is social media?

Social media is the collective term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create, share and interact with content (words, images, graphics and video content), as well as network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media platforms include Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Twitch and TikTok.

Why do we use social media and what can we use it for?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating the work of the City of Lichfield Concert Band (COLCB). It is important for designated members and employees and volunteers to participate in social media to engage with our audiences and stakeholders, contribute to relevant conversations, and raise the profile of COLCB using the appropriate accounts. Some members, employees, and volunteers may also support the band's work using their personal accounts, and many will have social media accounts for personal use.

Building an engaged online community can lead to more significant long-term support and involvement from supporters. [Social media guidance from the Charity Commission](#) (September 2023) conveys how social media can be a highly effective way for a charity to engage its audiences and communicate about its work.

Social media helps us to:

- Share our news and updates with our audiences
- Engage in important conversations with stakeholders
- Celebrate our successes
- Raise awareness of important issues and challenges
- Advertise job and volunteering opportunities
- Support our fundraising activities
- Increase our membership
- Build an online supportive community
- Raise our public profile and strengthen our reputation
- React to quickly changing situations and topics

Why do we need a social media policy?

Social media is a fast-moving online world, where nuance and context can be easily lost. While social media brings the band to a wide audience, it can also present risks. We want to ensure that all members, employees, and volunteers using social media represent and reflect COLCB in the best way possible. It is also important to mitigate risks (such as reputational or legal issues) associated with the use of social media to protect our supporters, members and employees and volunteers, work and reputation.

While we encourage the use of social media to support our communications strategy or plans, we have important standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe and adhere to. The difference between a personal and professional opinion can also be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to the band's work. Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations and is subject to the same laws as other kinds of publication or commentary in the public domain.

Failure to comply with this policy could expose the COLCB to reputational damage as well as putting members, employees, volunteers, and audiences at risk.

Responsibilities and breach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their compliance with this policy. Everyone is an ambassador for the Band.

Participation in social media on behalf of COLCB is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect.

Breaches of policy or inappropriate behaviour may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Please refer to our **Code of Conduct** for further information on our processes. Members, employees and volunteers who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach policies should seek advice from the COLCB Working Committee/ Social Media Officer.

Setting out the social media policy

Application

This policy applies to all social media platforms used by members and employees (including consultants, and freelancers) and volunteers (including trustees) in a professional and personal capacity.

This policy also applies to online blogs, wikis, podcasts, forums, and messaging based apps, such as WhatsApp. Social media can be accessed in various ways, including from a desktop or laptop computer, tablet or smartphone. This policy applies to the use of all such devices.

Internet access and monitoring usage

Point of contact for social media and authority to post on COLCB's social media accounts

Our Social Media Officer is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring, and management of our social media channels, and is supported by the Chair of the working committee and the Musical Director [MD] in this. If you have questions about any aspect of these channels, please consult them. No other members, employees, or volunteers are permitted to post content on COLCB official channels without the permission of the Social Media Officer in the first instance.

Which social media do we use?

The COLCB currently uses the following social media and communication channels in order to communicate with and between members, audiences and the wider general public:

Facebook, X, YouTube, WhatsApp, the official Band website, and email.

The administrators of the official band accounts are restricted to the Social Media Officer, Chair of the working committee, and the MD.

COLCB has a **Facebook** account which it uses to share news with supporters. This is managed by the Social Media Officer and Chair.

There are 2 official band **WhatsApp** groups: one, a closed group, where only administrators can post band information; the other is a general group open to members. Some sections within the band have set up smaller WhatsApp groups. This policy applies to all such groups.

Database for Friends of COLCB : only to be contacted from the official Band Email address using the BCC recipient field. (GDPR)

It is important that as members leave the band, administrators remove their details from contact systems. (GDPR)

YouTube: Material is posted by the MD and the SMO, with oversight from the band working committee.
Emails are used to share information within the band and also to band supporters. To protect recipients' personal details, communications should be sent using the BCC field only.
Band members also have their own **personal social media** accounts.

Policy ownership

The Trustees are responsible for authoring and updating this document. The policy must be approved by the Trustees and reviewed every year, unless a significant change requires the organisation to check the policy before the next review date. All members, employees, and volunteers will be notified of updates.

Rules for use: headlines

Code of conduct headlines

- I will not insult, harass, bully or intimidate individuals or organisations
- I will respond to others' opinions respectfully and professionally
- I will not do anything that breaches my terms of employment/voluntary role
- I will acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly using provided guidance
- I will disclose conflicts of interest where I am able
- I will not knowingly post inaccurate information
- I will link to online references and original source materials directly
- I will be considerate, kind and fair
- I will always ensure my activity does no harm to the organisation or to others
- I will champion COLCB

Rules for use: full list

Using COLCB's social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. Know our social media guardians

The Social Media Officer in conjunction with the Band Working Committee, is responsible for setting up and managing COLCB's social media channels. They have overall ownership of these accounts and only those authorised to do so by the Working Committee will have access to these accounts.

They will uphold best practices for channel security with secure passwords that regularly change. Never give out the passwords for our channels without express permission from Social Media Officer.

2. Be an ambassador for our brand

Members, employees, and volunteers must ensure they reflect COLCB's values in what they post and use our tone of voice. Our brand guidelines set out the style that all members, employees, and volunteers should refer to when posting content on COLCB's social media channels. Please note only the Social Media Officer, the Chair, and the MD is permitted to respond to comments on our social media posts ***on behalf of the organisation***. All posts and comments should be attributed to the charity and not an individual. In special cases it may be appropriate for a member, employee, or volunteer to make an individual comment as themselves, but the Social Media Officer reserves the right to delete these without notice if they are deemed harmful, unhelpful, or unnecessary.

3. Always pause and think before posting

When posting from COLCB's social media accounts, you must respond to comments in the voice of our organisation and not allow your own personal opinions to influence responses. Members, employees, and

volunteers must not reveal their personal opinions via our accounts by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'reposting' as COLCB, unless it is clear that you are doing so as an individual member, employee, or volunteer as part of an approach agreed with the Working Committee (e.g. as part of a 'takeover' of the role). If you are in doubt about COLCB's position on a particular issue, please speak to the Working Committee Chair.

4. Ensure brand consistency

Members, employees and volunteers must not create or manage any other social media channels, groups or pages on behalf of COLCB without express permission from the band Working Committee, and only after having received relevant training. This is to ensure brand consistency for consumers, and to ensure that the appropriate safeguarding and monitoring processes are in place.

5. Remember the bigger picture and focus on the benefit

Members, employees and volunteers must make sure that all social media content is pertinent and offers a benefit for COLCB to further our charitable purposes (either directly or indirectly, by engaging stakeholders and building our brand using our strategy). All content must accurately reflect COLCB's agreed position.

6. Bring value to our audience(s)

Those responsible for the management of our social media accounts should answer questions as swiftly as possible to help and engage with our service users and supporters.

7. Seek permission to share

If members, employees, or volunteers wish to contribute content for social media, they should obtain guidance and permission from the Social Media Officer who will defer to the Working Committee where necessary.

8. Obtain consent

Members, employees, and volunteers must not post content about supporters, service users or partners without their, or their guardian's, express permission. If members, employees, and volunteers are sharing information about supporters, service users or third party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from COLCB. **If using interviews, videos, or photos that clearly identify a child or young person; members, employees, and volunteers must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian, and additional assent of the young person if they are old enough to understand the concept, before using them on social media.**

9. Put safety first

It can be challenging working on social media and there may be times where members, employees, or volunteers could be subject to unpleasant or abusive comments directed at the band, our work or our people. We encourage everyone who is on social media on behalf of the charity to be aware of our safeguarding and wellbeing practices to deal with online abuse, and consult with Safeguarding Officer where necessary.

It is also vital that COLCB does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials in pursuit of social media engagement. For example, a video of a stunt.

10. Stick to the law

Members, employees, and volunteers must not encourage people to break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material.

11. Remain politically neutral

COLCB is not associated with any political organisation or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We can express views where appropriate on policies that impact our work and service users, but it is essential that COLCB remains, and is seen to be, politically neutral.

We cannot endorse a political party or candidate. We must carefully manage the risk that we are perceived to have any party-political bias and should carefully consider any posts which might be perceived as such, for example, posts which talk about individual politicians or parties rather than policies.

12. Check facts and be honest

Members, employees and volunteers should not automatically assume that material that is shared or included in any post is accurate, so should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification – for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it. But think first about how to manage any risk to the band and its brand in doing so by consulting with the SMO and Working Committee to craft the response.

13. Seek advice for complaints

If a complaint is made on COLCB's social media channels; members, employees, and volunteers should seek advice from the Chair of the Working Committee / Trustees before responding.

14. Know what to do in a crisis

Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the band's reputation.

The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the band or our members. The Social Media Officer & Working Committee regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of COLCB so we can catch any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis situation, the trustees will be involved and will consult '*Charity Commission serious incident reporting guidance*'.

If any members, employees or volunteers outside of the Working Committee becomes aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on COLCB's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the Chair, SMO or MD immediately. It is the responsibility of all members, employees, and volunteers to report complaints or comments that could escalate into a crisis or have serious implications for the charity. Only authorised persons are permitted to amend or delete content in a crisis.

See further guidance from CharityComms regarding [crisis communications and best practice](#).

15. Timings, schedules and rotas

Currently, there are no specific arrangements for timings to monitor the social media activity; it is carried out by the Social Media Officer.

16. Use AI appropriately

AI can be a valuable tool that can support our communications activities. As this medium develops, it will need monitoring. You must seek permission from the band committee chair before using AI and only use approved AI tools and processes.

17. Handover ownership if your role changes

You must hand over ownership of the group/page/account you manage to another appropriate member, employee, or volunteer if you change roles or if you leave COLCB. There will be a hand over period as agreed by the Working Committee.

Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct

Personal social media use by members, employees and volunteers can sometimes be attributed to the band or bring other risks for the band or individual members. This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media, but instead flags up those areas in which risks or conflicts might arise. COLCB members, employees, and volunteers are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are considerate of COLCB's values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Separate your personal views

Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive COLCB. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of COLCB. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about COLCB's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "Views are my own" or "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent COLCB's positions, policies or opinions."

2. Take care when publishing personal views

Those in management of the band including Trustees and public-facing or specialist roles where they are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing COLCB's view.

For senior roles, we expect you to take additional steps, such as:

- Being aware of your duties and responsibilities.
- Consulting the band's messaging and communication plans, being particularly cautious in how your communications as a leading figure for COLCB may be interpreted.
- Avoiding posting any material which might be construed as contrary or conflicting with the band's charitable mission or work.
- Ensuring you do take care when referring to the band by name on your personal accounts on social media. (in line with the first section of the policy).

3. Discuss risks and conflicts of interest

Members, employees, and trustees who have a personal blog, social media profile or website which indicates in any way that they are part of COLCB, should discuss any potential risk or conflicts of interest with the Working Committee.

4. Protect your personal reputation

Think about your personal reputation as well as the charity's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be the first to correct your own mistakes.

Remember that if you have a public profile with the band, your personal social media accounts could be looked at by critics of the band, and bear this in mind when posting.

5. Use your common sense and good judgement

Be aware of your association with COLCB and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the general public.

6. Don't approach VIPs directly

COLCB may wish to approach high-profile organisations and individuals, including: celebrities, journalists, politicians, and major donors. Do not approach high profile people or organisations from your personal social media accounts to ask them to support the band, as this could hinder any potential relationships that are being managed by the Working Committee. This includes asking for reposts about the band.

7. Refer press enquiries

If a member, employee, or volunteer is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to COLCB, they should talk to the Working Committee immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.

8. Keep your political activity separate from the band

When representing the band; members, employees, and volunteers are expected to uphold COLCB's positioning. Anyone who is politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from COLCB, and understand and avoid potential risks and conflicts of interest.

9. Protect your privacy

Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. Remember that a simple 'like' can draw attention to your personal accounts. What you publish is widely accessible and could be around for a long time, so do consider the content, and your privacy, carefully.

All members, employees, and volunteers who wish to engage with any of COLCB's social media platforms are strongly advised to ensure that they set the privacy levels of their personal sites as strictly as they can and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. All members, employees and volunteers should keep their passwords confidential and change them often. They should be regularly changed and should be 'Strong', using different passwords for different accounts.

In their own interests, members and employees and volunteers should be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social networking sites, such as addresses, home- and mobile- phone numbers.

10. Help us to raise our profile (where appropriate)

We encourage members, employees and volunteers to share posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support COLCB and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy (and taking into consideration the information above), we encourage members, employees, and volunteers to do this as it helps users connect to us and raises our profile.

However, please take care to think about the reputation of the band. If your personal social media account is not professional or otherwise appropriate for our audiences, please do not use it to amplify or promote the band, as to do so brings risks both to you personally and to the band.

11. Avoid logos or trademarks

Never use COLCB's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so.

12. Staying safe online

It bears repeating that it can be challenging operating on social media and there may be times where members, employees, and volunteers could be subject to unpleasant or abusive comments directed at the

charity, our work or our people. We encourage everyone who is on social media to be aware of our safeguarding and wellbeing practices to deal with online abuse, and consult with Safeguarding Officer where necessary.

Members, employees and volunteers should be vigilant regarding suspicious content and links, and must not reveal personal, confidential, or sensitive information about themselves, other members, employees, volunteers or supporters of COLCB. Everyone should be wary of fake accounts that may claim to be COLCB and should immediately notify the SMO and Chair of Working Committee.

Care must also be taken to ensure that any links to external sites from our social media accounts are appropriate and safe. For more information, please see our **Data Protection policy**

Please consult our relevant policies and procedures for the safeguarding of our members, employees, volunteers, and supporters.

Further guidelines: using social media in a professional and personal capacity

Defamation

[Defamation](#) is when a false statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published in print (such as in media publications) or online (such as Instagram Story, Facebook Live, Snapchat post). Whether members, employees, or volunteers are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring COLCB into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals, other organisations, or groups.

Copyright law

It is critical that all members and employees or volunteers abide by [the laws governing copyright](#), under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, when representing the band. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

Confidentiality

Any communications that members, employees, and volunteers make must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that COLCB is not ready to disclose yet.

Discrimination and harassment

Members and employees and volunteers should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official COLCB social media channel or a personal account. For example:

- Making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief.
- Using social media to bully another individual.
- Posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content.

Accessibility

In line with COLCB's Inclusion and Diversity policy, we endeavour to ensure our social media is as accessible as possible. This includes:

- Using plain English, accessible fonts and avoiding small text sizes
- Using contrasting colours
- Using subtitles where appropriate
- Using alt text for videos and images

- Explaining text contained in an image in the copy that accompanies it
- Following our brand guidelines which have been designed to be accessible.

You can view more guidance on the government website: [planning, creative and publishing accessible social media campaigns](#).

For accessibility best practices, visit the CharityComms resource: [Accessible communication - a starting point to foster more inclusive comms](#).

The Lobbying Act

Charities are legally allowed to campaign to bring about a change in policy or law to further their organisational purpose but can never be party political. In most cases, spending on charity campaigns that are in accordance with charity law will not be regulated under electoral law (often known as the 'Lobbying Act'¹).

Under the Lobbying Act, organisations (including charities) which spend more than £10,000 across the UK on 'regulated activity' during the regulated period need to register with [the Electoral Commission](#) within the outlined windows for elections.

Regulated activity is any activity which could reasonably be seen as intended to influence people's voting choice, either for parties or candidates (which a charity could never do) or for categories of candidates (e.g. female candidates, or candidates who support Net Zero). During these periods, all campaigning activity will be reviewed by the Working Committee and Trustees.

Use of social media in the recruitment process

Recruitment should be carried out in accordance with the Band Policy, associated procedures and guidelines. Any advertising of vacancies should be done and promoted through approved channels.

There should be no systematic or routine checking of candidates' online social media activities during the recruitment process, as conducting these searches might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics, such as religious beliefs or sexual orientation, played a part in a recruitment decision. This is in line with COLCB's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Use of social media to support fundraising activities

Our social media platforms may play a key role in our fundraising efforts and engaging with our donors. Before using our social media channels for fundraising purposes, guidance is available at Charity Commission, [The Code of Fundraising Practices](#).

Protection and intervention

The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. For example, Facebook. However, if a member, employee, or volunteer considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the Safeguarding Officer immediately.

Under 18s and vulnerable people

Young and vulnerable people face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming or radicalisation. Where known, when communicating with vulnerable or young people under 18-

¹ Set out initially in the [Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000](#), as amended by [the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014](#) and [the Elections Act 2022](#).

years-old via social media, all members, employees, and volunteers should ensure the online relationship with COLCB follows the same rules as offline.

Members, employees, and volunteers should ensure that vulnerable and young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online, and given guidance on security and privacy settings as necessary. Members, employees, and volunteers should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the vulnerable or young person and that content is appropriate for them. Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy.

All members, employees, and volunteers have a responsibility to do everything possible to ensure that vulnerable and young people are kept safe from harm. If you come across anything online that could mean someone is at risk, you should follow COLCB's safeguarding policies.

[The Online Safety Act 2003](#) has introduced measures to ensure children are protected online.

Please note: While all attempts have been made to cover an extensive range of situations, it is possible that this policy may not cover all eventualities. There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene the standards outlined in this document.

It is expected that in these circumstances, members and employees will always consult with the Band Working Committee where possible.

Related policies, laws and guidance

- Data Management & Protection Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy
- Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Policy
- Reporting [serious incidents](#) to the Commission, police or other regulators
- Disciplinary Policy
- Fundraising Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Employment Law

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Further external guidance

- [The Charity Commission guidance for charities on social media](#)
- [The Charity Commission checklist for developing a social media policy](#)
- [National Cyber Security Centre's guidance on social media and how to use it safely](#)
- [National Cyber Security Centre's guidance on protecting your published content](#)
- [The Charity Commission guidance on campaigning and political activity guidance for charities](#)
- [Government guidance on the Online Safety Bill](#)
- [Bates Wells website](#)