

# Social Media Policy

## 1 Introduction and Purpose

This document supplements the Green Party's national framework for ethics and conduct and informs members of what is appropriate or inappropriate use of social media and therefore provides an indication of which behaviours may lead to disciplinary action.

Party members are entitled to their own views, but broadcasting those views is considered a form of conduct to which this policy and the framework for ethics and conduct are applicable. This document should be read in conjunction with other related Green Party documents such as the *Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure*.

Social media for the purposes of this policy is defined as websites and applications which enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. It therefore includes internal platforms operated by the Green Party (e.g. Green Spaces, Basecamp etc.) as well as any and all external platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc.) which are all considered social media platforms, but it should be noted that conduct kept within 'internal platforms' only intended for party members is generally less likely to bring the party into disrepute as non-members are not expected to be able to access that content. The rules and responsibilities in this policy should still be followed when using any social media platform whether it is an internal or external platform.

Generally speaking, members are free to use personal social media accounts for personal and/or for party-political purposes, but should always follow any applicable laws, as well as any relevant platform rules along with the rules in this policy. This is particularly important for members who can be identified as a Green Party member, especially if their accounts are used in an official capacity or in a way which may be reasonably interpreted by others as an official Green Party communication, as this may bring the party into disrepute or otherwise be a breach of the rules and responsibilities outlined in this policy.

This document does not regulate the private communications e.g. 'direct messages' between members and non-members, including for small private groups, but other documents such as the *Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure* do.

This document does not provide advice for best practices on the effective use of social media as a part of election or other campaigns.

## 2 Scope

This policy applies to all members of the Green Party, but 'agents of the party' should pay particular attention to it and take care to follow it, being especially mindful of the effects of the conduct. Notably, agents of the party must not breach Equalities Law (i.e. the Equality Act 2010) when acting in the scope of their authority.

This is not an exhaustive list, but a member is an agent of the party if they currently hold an internal position within the Green Party or some part of it, or if they hold a political office representing the Green Party.

Similarly, any prominent party members (who may or may not be agents of the party) should also pay particular attention to this policy, and be especially mindful of their reach on social media platforms and the effects of their conduct.

This is not an exhaustive list, but prominent members of the party may have a large social media or other following, may be well known to the wider public, or may have recently or formerly held an internal role within the Green Party, or may have recently or formerly held political office (either representing the Green Party or not).

Staff members of the Green Party have a separate social media policy.

### 3 Rules and Responsibilities

#### 3.1 Policy on Conduct

- 3.1.1 Members must not use social media to breach the Green Party constitution, code of conduct, safeguarding, anti-harassment and bullying policies, or any similar ruling document.

- 3.1.2 Members must not engage in any form of prejudice when using social media.

*Examples of prejudice include, but are not limited to: sexism and misogyny, racism and xenophobia, queerphobia, homophobia, transphobia, antisemitism, islamophobia, ageism, and ableism.*

*This includes the use of dog-whistles.*

- 3.1.3 Members must not bully or harass other party members.

- 3.1.4 Members must not incite violence on social media.

- 3.1.5 Members must not impersonate other Green Party members.

- 3.1.6 Members must not make or repeat false statements, spread conspiracy theories, or participate in historical denialism.

- 3.1.7 Members must not undermine or erode trust in Green Party procedures without good reason.

- 3.1.8 Members must not bring the party into disrepute.

*Separate guidance on disrepute is available on the members website.*

## 3.2 Policy on Campaigning

- 3.2.1 The Green Party encourages good faith discussion and debate and it respects free speech and expression on social media except where limited by party policy.
- 3.2.2 Members are encouraged but are not under any obligation to actively support or endorse any party policy or candidate or to campaign for the Green Party on social media.
- 3.2.3 Members must not campaign against a properly selected Green Party candidate on social media.

*This will be considered an automatic termination of membership per the Green Party constitution.*

- 3.2.4 Members must not mislead others or misrepresent established Green Party policy, present their personal views as established party policy, or impersonate the Green Party or any part of it, e.g. through the harmfully deceptive use of the party logo and/or branding.
- 3.2.5 The Green Party encourages the use of internal platforms for organising or campaigning in regards to changing our own policies or organisational procedures, but the use of public or external platforms for these purposes is not prohibited.
- 3.2.6 Members are generally free to criticise or disagree with Green Party policy in a personal capacity, as well as to campaign to change our policies or the policies of any other political party or government of any level (nationally or internationally), as well as to express their preferences with respect to any election – but campaigning on social media for policies which are in conflict with our core values or philosophical basis is prohibited and may also risk bringing the party into disrepute.
- 3.2.7 Unofficial accounts or groups established by party members for a particular campaign or other similar purpose are permitted but must be clearly labelled as unofficial if they are not representing or are not officially authorised by the Green Party or some part of it. Members who manage or use such accounts should take particular care not to breach rule 3.2.4

## 3.3 Policy on Criticism

- 3.3.1 Members criticising the conduct of other party members is allowed, especially when holding members to account or when highlighting and/or refuting prejudice, mistakes, inaccuracies, falsehoods, or breaches of this or any other Green Party policy.

## 3.4 Official Green Party Social Media Accounts and Groups

- 3.4.1 **Official Green Party social media accounts or groups** are non-personal accounts or spaces accessible to the public which: represent or are run, managed, administered, or moderated by the Green Party or some part of it e.g. the Young Greens, Wales Green Party/Plaid Werdd Cymru, English regional parties, local parties, or recognised groups of common interest or liberation groups etc. Communications made by these accounts may be considered an official communication from the Green Party as a whole.
- 3.4.2 Members must not use or attempt to use any official Green Party social media accounts without the appropriate authorisation to do so.
- 3.4.3 Members who have proper authorisation to use an official Green Party social media account have a responsibility to follow any democratically agreed sign-off procedures.
- 3.4.4 When using any official Green Party social media accounts, these must be used in an appropriate and civil manner, and not be used for improper personal promotion or for purposes not in the interests of the Green Party or against the interests of the part of the party for which the account is intended for. These accounts must not be used for a purpose which is in breach of the core values or philosophical basis of the Green Party or its policies.
- 3.4.5 Groups which manage official Green Party social media accounts or groups have a collective duty to report the usernames, group names etc. of any active, official, publicly accessible social media accounts or groups to the co-chairs of the Green Party Regional Council ([gprccochairs@greenparty.org.uk](mailto:gprccochairs@greenparty.org.uk)) upon request.
- The Green Party may use this information to produce a directory of active official social media accounts and groups for the benefit of members and/or the public.*
- 3.4.6 Groups which manage official Green Party social media accounts have a collective duty to inform Green Party Regional Council, Disciplinary Committee, or other relevant bodies which member(s) were responsible for the sign-off and/or posting of any post upon request.
- 3.4.7 Official Green Party social media accounts should generally not criticise the Green Party or its established policies or promote policies that are not their own or those of the Green Party or some other part of it – unless it is regarding a matter related to that part of the party and it does not conflict with the core values or philosophical basis of the party.