

# Schedule A to By-Law 2024-XX

## Township of Centre Wellington Social Media Policy Last Updated: October 2024

### 1.0 Policy Statement

- a) The Township of Centre Wellington (Township) is dedicated to maintaining open and transparent communication with its residents through various tools, including social media. By leveraging social media, the Township demonstrates its commitment to providing the public with timely, accurate, accessible, transparent, and accountable information.
- b) The Township will actively promote the use of social media platforms as a means for fast, two-way communication about our programs, services, and news affecting our community. Specific individuals will be authorized to use social media in an official capacity, ensuring that all communications are accurate, consistent, and professional, aligning with our overall communication efforts.
- c) The Township of Centre Wellington promotes the use of social media platforms as an efficient and coordinated approach to communicating all Township business to residents and community partners. This includes, but is not limited to, sharing information about programs, services, and news affecting the community through professional, creative, and strategic communications.

### 2.0 Purpose

The Township's social media Policy and related Guidelines outline the corporate standards regarding communicating to and engaging with the public using social media platforms for employees and elected officials. This policy also outlines the following, all monitored daily by the Strategic Initiatives and Communications Division:

- a) That the Township of Centre Wellington provides a single, comprehensive corporate Facebook, X (Formerly Twitter), YouTube, and LinkedIn page which is used to inform, engage and educate residents and community partners about Township business.
- b) That Elora & Fergus Tourism provides a single, comprehensive corporate Facebook and Instagram page which is used to inform tourists, community partners, and other visitors about what our region has to offer.
- c) That the Fergus Grand Theatre provides a single, comprehensive corporate Facebook and Instagram page which is used to inform residents, community partners and tourists about performances taking place at the theatre<sup>1</sup>.
- d) That Centre Wellington Fire Rescue provides a single, comprehensive corporate Facebook and X (Formerly Twitter) account which is used to inform residents of fire safety and topics relating to fire safety.
- e) That any future social media accounts created for additional departments of the Township, and/or utilizing new social media platforms.

<sup>1</sup>The Fergus Grand Theatre does not engage in the promotion of performances on behalf of its rental clients. Instead, the responsibility for marketing and publicizing a performance held at the theatre rests entirely with the rental client. Rental clients are expected to manage all aspects of their performance's promotion to ensure its success.

## Schedule A to By-Law 2024-XX

### 3.0 Policy Scope

This policy applies to all Township of Centre Wellington employees and members of Council who make public statements on Township social media platforms that discuss, share or comment on the Township – as well as outlining “best practices” for personal use by employees and elected officials. Additionally, this policy serves to:

- a) Protect the Township’s (and affiliate divisions with a social media platform) reputation and ensure consistency and professionalism in how the Township and its employees communicate about the Township’s business with our community partners.
- b) Provide employees and members of Council with clear usage guidelines and acceptable corporate and personal use of social media platforms and/or personal websites as they relate to discussing the business of the Township of Centre Wellington.
- c) Protect employees of the Township from any abusive, discriminatory, harassing, and/or demeaning comments that may be received via messages, comments, etc.
- d) Outline the official social media tools that the Township has adopted for use.
- e) Provide protocol around monitoring, administration, acceptable use and privacy.

### 4.0 Governance

- a) As the central hub of information and social media expertise within the Township, the Strategic Initiatives and Communications Division, under the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), will oversee the management and operations of the Township’s social media presence. This leadership ensures that all social media platforms are managed effectively, maintaining clear and consistent tone and branding for our followers.
- b) This policy is supported by the Social Media Guidelines that are created, monitored and enforced by the Strategic Initiatives and Communications Division, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Department of the Township.
- c) Although the Township has extended social media accounts to certain departments, such as Elora Fergus Tourism, Fergus Grand Theatre, and Centre Wellington Fire Rescue, the primary Township of Centre Wellington account will remain the central source for updates related to Township activities (e.g., road and facility closures, parks and recreation programs).
- d) In emergency situations, communication resources will be allocated to ensure timely and accurate information is disseminated through social media platforms, following corporate emergency management protocols.

### 5.0 Social Media Terms and Conditions of Use

- a) Generally, user comments and messages posted to the Township of Centre Wellington’s official social media pages are considered transitory records and will not be kept as permanent records by the Township. By using Centre Wellington’s social media, users acknowledge and consent that their comments or messages may become part of the public record and used in official Centre Wellington documentation. It is at the Township’s sole discretion as to which comments will be saved to form part of the Township’s official business records.
- b) Images and comments posted by third parties do not necessarily represent the views of the Township of Centre Wellington. The Township cannot and does not guarantee users’ privacy on third-party social networking sites, as users are subject to the terms and conditions of the specific

## Schedule A to By-Law 2024-XX

application on that website. Users should review and agree to the third-party terms and conditions prior to participating.

- c) The Township reserves the right to delete, without notification, any objectionable content posted by the public. Any individual who repeatedly violates the terms of this policy will be blocked from posting to the Township's page.
- d) Objectionable content includes, but is not limited to: personal attacks, harassment, threatening, defamatory, abusive, offensive, graphic, obscene, explicit, hateful, racist content or content that suggests or encourages illegal activity.
- e) If content is posted that is deemed to be spam or is for commercial purposes, as determined by the Township at its sole discretion, the content will be deleted.
- f) The Township will not be responsible for any losses or damages suffered as a result of using third-party social media sites. Those using social media participate at their own risk and for their own benefit, and in doing so accept that they have no right of action against the Township of Centre Wellington related to such use. A link between the Township of Centre Wellington's social media platforms and any other website does not imply an endorsement or sponsorship by the Township of that website, or the creator of that website.
- g) The Township of Centre Wellington's social media sites are provided on an "as is" and "as available" basis. The Township makes no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, as to the site's operation or the information, content or materials included on these sites. The Township reserves the right to change, at any time, and at the Township's sole discretion, the terms, and conditions of use. Please refer to this section of the policy often to review these terms and conditions. Continued use of the social networking sites constitutes a user's agreement to all such terms and conditions.
- h) The corporate social media accounts are not used for:
  - a. Promoting non-Township activities such as events, fundraisers, or other community-led initiatives.
  - b. Promoting business, political, or other partisan interests.

### 6.0 Legal Requirements

- a) **The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)** provides rules for the accessibility of website, including social media. While social media websites do not qualify as "Township-owned", we will make every effort to make our social media as accessible as possible using available features.
- b) **The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)** applies to any personal information that appears on social media. Personal information (i.e., emails, addresses, etc.) should not appear on any Township social media platform/account.
- c) **Intellectual Property Rights** are owned by the creators of any original work, including artwork, music, photographs, written works or graphics. On social media, the Township can only use such work that has been legally acquired and licensed. This can be achieved by:
  - a. Using materials created by the Strategic Initiatives and Communications Division.
  - b. Taking your own photos/videos and using a photo consent form/notice if there are subjects with visible faces.
  - c. Sharing works with written permission from other social media users.
  - d. Outsourcing photography (MUST include a written and signed contract and photo release form that states the material can be used across the Township for a variety of purposes).

## Schedule A to By-Law 2024-XX

### 7.0 Accessibility

- a) The Township of Centre Wellington is dedicated to the principle of accessibility and will make every effort to ensure that all corporate social media meets accessibility requirements. The Strategic Initiatives and Communications Division will oversee the delivery of content and communications through our corporate social media platforms.
- b) Social media platforms offer built-in accessibility features that help people with disabilities overcome barriers to accessing content. In addition to utilizing these features, the Township will adhere to best practices in accordance with the AODA and other accessibility standards to maximize inclusivity.
- c) If you encounter any content on the above-mentioned platforms that do not meet accessibility standards, or if there are any questions or concerns, please contact the Township directly at:

Strategic Initiatives and Communications Division  
Township of Centre Wellington  
1 MacDonald Square, Elora, ON N0B 1S0  
519-846-9691 ext. 220  
communications@centrewellington.ca

### 7.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Communications (MSIC) and the Digital Media Associate (DMA) are responsible for monitoring the corporate accounts during the Township's regular business hours of Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Outside of business hours, the DMA and/or the MSIC will continue to passively monitor networks and, if necessary, flag items for follow-up during regular business hours. In addition, the DMA and MSIC will:

- a) Correct misinformation and ensure all content is up-to-date.
- b) Make every effort to respond to concerns and questions on its social media platforms. Township staff aim to address all appropriate comments within three (3) business days (excluding holidays and weekends). This turnaround time may be impacted by staff availability and available resources.
- c) Deny access to users who post inappropriate or offensive comments.
- d) Remove posts that are inappropriate or violate individual social media platforms' guidelines.
- e) Respond to any reasonable questions or concerns.
- f) Ensure all Township communications come from the corporate social media accounts. Staff and Members of Council may share these communications to their personal accounts.