



## Township of Centre Wellington Social Media Guidelines

**SUBJECT: Social Media Guidelines**

**LAST UPDATED: October, 2024**

### **Purpose of the Guidelines**

The Social Media Guidelines provide an overview of approved practices for creating content, posting and working with social media platforms. It is designed to assist employees and members of Council to understand the opportunities and risks that come with using social media.

Social media changes and evolves day-to-day, and this guide will be updated to include new developments as they arise.

### **Why the Township Uses Social Media**

The Township of Centre Wellington is committed to open and transparent communication with its residents by using a variety of tools, including social media. By utilizing social media, the Township is showing its commitment to the public by providing them with timely, accurate, accessible, transparent, and accountable information.

The main use of Township Social Media accounts is to:

- a) Provide efficient, two-way communications about (but not limited to) Township programs, services, and news affecting our community.
- b) Increase trust in the Township through greater dialogue and openness.
- c) Create content that can enhance, add to, or correct mass media coverage or misinformation.
- d) Relay information quickly in times of crisis or emergency.
- e) Provide digital customer service options.

The corporate social media accounts are not used to:

- a) Promote non-Township activities such as events, fundraisers, or other community-led initiatives.
- b) Promote business, political, or other partisan interests.

### **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) Ensure all Township communications come from the corporate social media accounts. Staff and Members of Council may share these communications to their personal accounts.

While the Township will make every effort to respond to concerns and questions directed to Township social media, at the DMA and/or the MSIC discretion may request that the discussion be redirected to either phone or email support channels. The reason(s) for the request would include but are not limited to, privacy concerns (i.e. resident(s), or employee(s) of the Township), character limitations (X (Formerly Twitter)/'X'), and amount of detail required to resolve a situation.

### **Personal Use of Social Media by Members of Council and Employees**

Township employees who are not in the Strategic Initiatives and Communications Division are not authorized to publish or comment on social media in any manner that could imply they are doing so on behalf of the Township of Centre Wellington. Incidental or occasional personal use of social media on personal or workplace devices is permitted, provided that such use does not result in any measurable expense to the Township in terms of time, materials, or productivity, and adheres to the limitations outlined in this policy.

### **Employee and Members of Council Conduct**

The Township expects all employees and Members of Council who use social media do so without breaching their duties to the Township and adhere to their respective Codes of Conduct. Employees and Members of Council should consider the following:

- a) Even if you don't explicitly identify yourself as a Township employee or Member of Council, others may identify you as an employee or Member of Council by your name, your place of work, a photograph, or by the content you post.
- b) Identifiable Township employees should make it clear that their position does not officially represent the Township's position. Use phrases such as "in my personal view" or "Personally..." to communicate that you are expressing personal views.
- c) Do not use visual cues that suggest you represent the Township. Do not post Township-owned logos, photographs, graphics or other media without the Township's authorization.
- d) Do not circulate any organizational or confidential information, such as internal deliberations about how decisions are made, personal information, such as client or employee information, or negative comments about the Township of Centre Wellington, Members of Council, Employees or residents.
- e) Do not disparage or embarrass the Township, individual Members of Council, employees, and others associated with the Township.
- f) Do not engage in workplace discrimination or harassment, or activity that includes inappropriate comments, photographs, links, etc.

Overall, employees and Members of Council are expected to conduct themselves professionally both on and off duty. Even when an employee does not publicly associate themselves with the Township on social media, all materials associated with their page may be perceived to reflect upon the Township.

Further, employees and Members of Council should not expect confidentiality or privacy about their online activities as they pertain to the Township of Centre Wellington. The traditional legal view is that posting content on social media sites about an employer is considered a publication and not private activity. Members of Council and Employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online as it relates to the Township.

As representatives of the Advisory Committee or Volunteers for the Township, it is imperative to adhere to the Township's Social Media Guidelines. Your compliance helps maintain the integrity and professionalism of our community engagement efforts.

### **Public Conduct**

Users and visitors to the Township's social media accounts/pages should be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a communication platform and information-sharing tool between the Township and the public.

The Township reserves the right to remove inappropriate, inaccurate, irrelevant or unproductive content (i.e. posts and comments) from social media accounts. If the user continues to post inappropriate, irrelevant, inaccurate or unproductive content, the Township may ban/block the user from the site at the discretion of the Strategic Initiatives and Communications Division.

Comments, posts, or articles containing the following content will not be allowed:

- Comments not topically related to the topic and/or issue being commented upon.
- Account spamming, trolling or over posting.
- Posts that are meant to solicit sales, products, or goods and services.
- Discriminatory, profane, aggressive, hateful, defamatory, insulting, rude, abusive or violent language or content.
- Content that includes or includes links to objectionable material.
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.
- Information that may compromise the privacy, safety or security of the Township, public, or public systems.
- Comments or posts that include inaccurate material or misrepresent facts as known by the Corporation.
- Comments or posts that impersonate or misrepresent someone else, including public figures, Municipal staff or Municipal officials.
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

The Township of Centre Wellington is not responsible for any comments or use of material posted by users.

### **Creating a New Social Media Account**

The Township's official accounts (Township of Centre Wellington, Centre Wellington Fire Rescue, Elora & Fergus Tourism, Fergus Grand Theatre) were established to convey messages deemed important to the Township, but some Departments/Divisions may believe a dedicated social media presence is required to meet business goals. The Strategic Initiatives & Communications Division can help determine if a new account is the best solution, and if so, will assist in the creation process. However, all communications from new accounts will come from the DMA and/or MSIC, not the Department/Division that the account is for.

Any future social media accounts created under the Township of Centre Wellington will be expected to adhere to the social media Policy and Social Media Guidelines. All content must be clearly identifiable with Township branding (see Branding Guidelines) to keep a consistent tone and voice throughout our social media platforms. Please refer to the following Style Guides (Attachment A) for best practices and acceptable use:

- a) Township of Centre Wellington Style Guide
- b) Fergus Grand Theatre Style Guide
- c) Centre Wellington Fire Rescue Style Guide
- d) Elora & Fergus Tourism Style Guide

Upon the creation of a new social media account, a style guide will be created to outline best practices and the pre-determined look and feel of the new account(s).

### **What Departments/Divisions Should Consider Before Requesting a Social Media Account**

- Is your target audience on social media and if so, how can you get their attention?
- Can your goals be met by the Township's current corporate accounts?
- Does the account align with the Township's Social Media Policy and Social Media Guidelines?
- Can you provide engaging content regularly?
- How does the new account support the Township's overall communication and strategic goals?

### **Closing a Social Media Account**

All social media accounts and related contacts remain the exclusive property of the Township. If you would like to close your social media accounts, please contact the Strategic Initiatives and Communications Division.

### **Requesting a Social Media Post or Campaign**

If you have an idea for a social media post or campaign in relation to your Department/Division, please contact the Strategic Initiatives and Communications Division. While one-off items will be considered, posts and campaigns are better as part of a communication or business plan.

All requests **MUST** be provided to the Strategic Initiatives and Communications Division in a timely manner. Requests will not be considered if enough time and/or content is not given in advance of the desired

timeline. Please speak with The Strategic Initiatives & Communications Division on acceptable timelines for social media posts or campaigns.

### **Requests to Share Posts from External Social Media Accounts**

If you would like the Strategic Initiatives and Communications Division to share a post from a non-Township social media account, the following criteria are required:

- a) It is connected to a Township or public sector initiative.
- b) It is timely and aligns with the current social media calendar/schedule.
- c) It does not contain commercial messages, advertising, or political content.

The Township's main accounts do not share messages that could show political, partisan, or business favouritism. This includes posts about third-party activities such as charities, community events, or other non-Township activities.

### **Social Media Account Inventory**

Per the Social Media Policy, the Strategic Initiatives and Communications Division holds the credentials to all social media accounts across the Township.

#### **Main Corporate Accounts**

Township of Centre Wellington

- X (Formerly Twitter) ([@CentrWellington](#))
- Facebook ([@CentreWellington](#))
- LinkedIn ([Township of Centre Wellington](#))

Centre Wellington Fire Rescue

- X (Formerly Twitter) ([@Fire\\_CW](#))
- Facebook ([@CentreWellingtonFire](#))

Elora & Fergus Tourism

- Facebook ([@visitelorafergus](#))
- Instagram ([@elorafergus](#))

Fergus Grand Theatre

- Facebook ([@FergusGrandTheatre](#))
- Instagram ([@fergusgrandtheatre](#))

While the social media Policy is approved by Council, the Social Media Guidelines are maintained and edited as required by the Strategic Initiatives and Communications Division and approved by the CAO.