Social media is a blanket term applied to a range of online multimedia tools that are used for creating content and two-way communication.

**1. Policy statement**

1.1. This policy is intended to help members make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as social networking websites, forums, message boards, blogs or comments on web-articles such as Twitter and Facebook.

1.2. This policy outlines the standards the Community Council members should observe when using social media on behalf of the Community Council.

**2. The scope of the policy**

2.1. All members when acting on behalf of the Community Council are expected to comply with this policy to protect the interests of the Community Council.

2.2. Breach of this policy by Community Council members will be raised during the course of business at the next calendared meeting from the highlighted breach.

**3. Responsibility for implementation of the policy**

3.1. Tannach and District Community Council has responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.

3.2. The members are responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for changes to minimise risk.

3.3. Community Council members should ensure they take the time to read and understand this policy. Any breach of this policy should be raised with the Chair of the Community Council.

**4. Using social media sites in the name of the Community Council**

4.1. Only nominated members are permitted to post material on a social media website in the name of the Community Council and on its behalf in accordance with the scope of this policy.

4.2. If you are unsure if your comments are appropriate do not post them until you have checked with the Chair of the Community Council.

**5. Using social media**

5.1 The Community Council recognises the importance of the internet in shaping public thinking about the Community Council and the activities it carries out in the area. It also recognises the importance of our Community Council members joining in on behalf of the Community Council and helping shape community conversation.

Before using social media on any matter which might affect the interests of the Community Council you must have read and understood this policy

**6. Rules for use of social media**

Whenever you are permitted to use social media on behalf of the Community Council in accordance with this policy, you must adhere to the following general rules:

6.1 Do not upload, post or forward a link to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content.

6.2. Any Community Council member who feels they have been harassed or bullied, or are offended by material posted or uploaded by a colleague or member of the public onto a social media website should inform the Chair of the Community Council.

6.3. Never disclose commercially sensitive, personal, private or confidential information. If you are unsure whether the information you wish to share falls within one of these categories, you should discuss with fellow members of the Community Council.

6.4. Do not upload, post or forward any content belonging to a third party unless you have that third party’s consent.

6.5. Before you include a link to a third-party website, check that any terms and conditions of that website permit you to link to it.

6.6. When making use of any social media platform, you must read and comply with its terms of use.

6.7. Be honest and open, but be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people’s perceptions of the Community Council.

6.8. Don’t escalate heated discussions, try to be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations.

6.9. Don’t discuss colleagues without their prior approval.

6.10. Consider others’ privacy, avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory.

6.11 Avoid publishing your contact details or individual identity when posting on behalf of the Community Council. Always post as the collective voice of the Community Council.

6.12 Avoid publishing anyone’s contact details without prior consent.

**7. Monitoring use of social media websites**

7.1 Community Council members should be aware that use of social media websites for Community Council purposes may be monitored and, where breaches of this policy are found may be raised at the next calendared meeting,

7.2. Misuse of social media websites can, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or otherwise give rise to legal liability against you and the Community Council.

7.3. A serious case of uploading, posting forwarding or posting a link to any of the following types of material whilst representing the Community Council will result in immediate suspension from accessing the Community Council social media platforms. This will be raised at the next calendared meeting (this list is not exhaustive):

a) pornographic material (that is, writing, pictures, films and video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature);

b) a false and defamatory statement about any person or organisation;

c) material which is offensive, obscene, criminal, discriminatory, derogatory or may cause embarrassment to the Community Council, HC Councillors or Highland Council employees;

d) confidential information about the Community Council or anyone else;

e) any other statement which is likely to create any liability (whether criminal or civil, whether for you or the Community Council);

f) or material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights.

Any such action will be addressed immediately.

**8. Monitoring and review of this policy**

8.1. The Community Council shall be responsible for reviewing this policy regularly to ensure that it reflects best practice.