



Social Media Policy

The Steel Valley Project recognises and embraces the benefits and opportunities that social media can bring as a tool to share positive news stories, to improve awareness of our projects/events and to raise funds.

For the purposes of this policy, social media is defined as a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes blogs, video and image sharing websites, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

We recognise that many of our volunteers, trustees, supporters and staff are on social media too, using it to help share information about the Steel Valley Project and also in their private lives. However, there is an inherent risk involved in using social media in that it is an instantaneous and far reaching form of communication. Inappropriate use can impact upon staff, volunteers and the reputation of the charity.

We encourage individuals to engage, collaborate and innovate through social media, whilst being aware of the potential impact on both themselves and the charity. It is important to remember that we are all ambassadors for the Steel Valley Project and that social media is never private.

This policy aims to:

- Give clear guidelines on what volunteers, trustees and staff can say about the Steel Valley Project;
- Comply with relevant legislation and protect volunteers, trustees and staff;
- Help supervisors to manage performance effectively;
- Help volunteers, trustees and staff draw a line between their private lives and their work with the Steel Valley Project;
- Protect the Steel Valley Project against liability from the actions of volunteers, trustees and staff;
- Be clear about sensitive issues and explain how problems with inappropriate use will be addressed.

1. Policy statement

- 1.1. We recognise that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics relevant to our

work using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and blogs.

- 1.2. This policy aims to protect individuals working with us in any role and to encourage them to take responsibility for what they write, exercising good judgment and common sense.
- 1.3. Inappropriate use of social media can pose risks to our confidential and proprietary information and reputation, and can jeopardise our compliance with legal obligations. To minimise these risks, to avoid loss of work time and to ensure that our IT resources and communications systems are used only for appropriate business purposes, we expect volunteers, trustees and employees to adhere to this policy.

2. Who is covered by the policy?

- 2.1. This policy relates to all volunteers, trustees and employees (subsequently referred to as 'individuals') who create or contribute to blogs, wikis, social networks, apps, forums, virtual worlds, or any other kind of social media.

3. Scope and purpose of the policy

- 3.1. This policy deals with the use of all forms social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and all other social networking sites, and all other internet postings including blogs.
- 3.2. It applies to all use and all forms of social media where there is a potential impact on the Steel Valley Project, whether for work-related or personal use, whether during working hours or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using the Steel Valley Project's IT facilities and equipment, or equipment belonging to individuals, or any other third party.
- 3.3. If an individual is found in breach of this policy, their supervisor will have the right to address this.
- 3.4. 'Supervisors' include the Steel Valley Project General Manager (for employees), the Steel Valley Project Environmental Project Officers (for Volunteers) and the Head of the Trustees (for Trustees).
- 3.5. Individuals may be required to remove postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy.
- 3.6. This policy links to all other policies, therefore social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of our other policies such as equal opportunities and data protection.

4. Personnel responsible for implementing the policy

- 4.1. All supervisors have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that individuals understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and taking action when behaviour falls below this.
- 4.2. All individuals are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media or questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be reported to the Project Manager.
- 4.3. Any content which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported to a supervisor or the Project Manager.

5. Guidelines for the responsible use of social media

The following sections of the policy provide individuals with common-sense guidelines and recommendations for using social media responsibly and safely.

- 5.1. To help protect our charity's reputation, individuals must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about:
 - a) The Steel Valley Project;
 - b) Steel Valley Project volunteers, trustees, staff or clients, past or present;
 - c) Suppliers and vendors;
 - d) Other affiliates and stakeholders.

Individuals should also avoid social communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage our business reputation, even indirectly.

- 5.2. Individuals should only comment within their own area of expertise to provide their own perspectives on non-confidential activities at the Steel Valley project.
- 5.3. Individuals should never represent themselves or the Steel Valley Project in a false or misleading way. All statements must be true and not misleading; all claims must be substantiated.
- 5.4. Individuals are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media (as part of their role or on personal sites). Remember that what is published on social media will be available to be read by anyone including colleagues, volunteers, future employers and people you don't know for a long time. Keep this in mind before posting content and, if in doubt, don't post it
- 5.5. Please use common sense and common courtesy. Individuals should ask permission to publish or report conversations that are meant to be private or internal to the Steel Valley Project.

- 5.6. Please do not tag anyone in photos on social media. This is because the person in the image may be vulnerable or under 18. If individuals plan to use a photo or quote from someone on social media, they must obtain their consent first. Please speak with the Project Manager as a consent form may need completing.
- 5.7. There is no obligation for individuals to link their personal social media to any Steel Valley Project social media.
- 5.8. Please do not set up a social media account which represents the Steel Valley Project before speaking to the Project Manager first.
- 5.9. Unless expressly authorised to speak on behalf of the Steel Valley Project, using a Steel Valley Project social media account, individuals should make it clear in their posts that they are speaking on their own behalf. This includes writing in the first person when communicating something on social media which relates to the Steel Valley Project.
- 5.10. We're happy for individuals to share that they are a volunteer, trustee or employee, but ask that they state that their views are their own and do not represent those of the charity. For example, they could state 'all views my own'. The Steel Valley Project logo should not be used as a profile picture on individual accounts. Individuals should also ensure that their profile and any content posted is consistent with the image they present as part of their role with the Steel Valley Project.
- 5.11. Individuals are responsible for the privacy settings of any social media sites they use and should ensure that they are set to the appropriate level if they wish to limit who can see their information. Individuals should be aware of security threats and be on guard for social engineering and phishing attempts: social networks may have been used to distribute spam and malware.
- 5.12. Individuals should maintain professional boundaries, even when others initiate electronic interaction via personal websites or social networks. This may include declining 'friend' requests on personal social media profiles and maintaining a professional tone in all communications.
- 5.13. Individuals should remember that they must respect confidentiality at all times and protect confidential information. They should be mindful of Data Protection issues and, if in doubt, speak to the Project Manager. Confidential information includes things such as unpublished details about our work, details of current projects, future projects, financial information or information held on our supporters, staff or volunteers.
- 5.14. If an individual is uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, they should refrain from making the communication until they have discussed it with the Project Manager.

- 5.15. If an individual sees content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on Steel Valley Project or our stakeholders, they should report it to the Project Manager. All individuals are responsible for protecting our reputation.
- 5.16. Individuals should be thoughtful, polite and observe good manners online. If an individual's use of social media is considered to be derogatory, discriminatory, bullying, threatening, defamatory, offensive, intimidating, harassing, creating legal liability for the Steel Valley Project, or bringing the Steel Valley Project into disrepute, then we may take further action. This may include comments, videos or photographs which have been posted on social media sites about the Steel Valley Project volunteers, steering committee members or employees.

6. Personal use of social media in the office environment

- 6.1. We recognise that individuals may occasionally desire to use social media for personal activities in the office or by means of our computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems.
- 6.2. We authorise such occasional use during rest breaks so long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content and does not interfere with their role. Individuals should not use Steel Valley Project IT resources and communications systems for any matter that they wish to be kept private or confidential.
- 6.3. If using social media while working for the Steel Valley Project, please note that the circulation of chain letters or other spam is never permitted. Circulating or posting commercial, personal, religious or political solicitations, or promotion of outside organisations unrelated to Steel Valley Project work is also prohibited.
- 6.4. Where appropriate, the Steel Valley Project reserves the right to monitor use of social media platforms and take appropriate action to protect against any misuse that may be harmful to the Steel Valley Project.

Disclaimer

Reasonable precautions have been taken to ensure information in this publication is accurate. However it is not intended to be legally comprehensive; it is designed to provide guidance in good faith, without accepting liability. If relevant, we therefore recommend you take appropriate professional advice before taking any action on the matters covered herein.