

Social Media Strategy 2023



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Introduction

The aim is to make the most of SKDC's social media channels to build trust and recognition of the Council's brands.

To support this the Communications Team works to deliver good quality press releases as well as responding to requests for further information for both traditional and social media channels in an open and honest way.

Our digital communication (including our media release distribution platform Onclusive) improves engagement and understanding of our audiences, through analytics and tracking, creating two-way conversations.

SKDC's social media work highlights the Council's activities in support of the Corporate Plan by:

- › Reaching a wide audience
- › Improving engagement
- › Building relationships with, and monitoring, stakeholders
- › Driving traffic to our website as a 'go-to' place for information

- › Sharing information about SKDC services and events
- › Answering enquiries
- › Efficiently conveying vital information at times of emergency

We meet the corporate objective of being a high-performing council by increasing reach on social media channels.

Another key aim is to reduce the amount of time spent dealing with customer service queries on our social media channels by directing people through to our website information and contact forms.



Informative, consistent and timely

The Communications Team ensures SKDC's key messages are communicated in an informative, consistent and timely manner, using appropriate tools and techniques.

These include the use of social media channels Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, the Council's website at www.southkesteven.gov.uk, as well as traditional media sources.

The use of social media platforms has led to an expectation from our audiences of direct and timely information, which dovetails with the overall Communications Strategy to engage successfully with key stakeholders.

Monitoring, maintaining and updating the social media channels and corporate areas of the website is an important function of the

Communications Team, and ensures residents, businesses and visitors can access many of the Council's services at a time and place that suits them.

We aim to be open and transparent: key council meetings are broadcast where possible and supported by real-time social media to increase engagement with democracy.



Examples of social posts



Emergency communications and resilience

Our social media channels are particularly useful when dealing with crisis communications and providing regular updates and information, and have become an integral part of the Council's approach to communications.

There is a zero-tolerance approach to foul and abusive language, racism or any other form of discrimination on our platforms, and users who contravene these rules are blocked.

The team manages communications emergencies and critical incidents out of hours where required. As a partner in the Local Resilience Forum and a member of internal emergency planning groups, we are alerted to incidents and emerging issues so we can take appropriate action such as drafting statements, posting on social media, and briefing staff and members.



Monitoring times

The social media administrators are responsible for monitoring and ensuring any comment or post that breaches the statement is reviewed and removed. Monitoring times are during normal office hours, but regular checks can be made outside of these times to ensure there are no gaps in the security and digital wellbeing of the council's social space.

An appropriate tone

Messages are composed in an appropriate and conversational tone to promote a friendly relationship and create a positive digital environment where users are happy and confident to interact and engage:

- › Always respond in a professional manner
- › Engage with conversations and ask questions / react to positive comments
- › Continue a conversation outside the public domain if the topic is sensitive or difficult
- › Schedule content regularly in order to avoid gaps of communication



Who can write content?

Every member of the organisation can suggest content for any of our social media channels.

It is important that content shared from outside the organisation (for example through re-tweets) is monitored to ensure incorrect information, spam and explicit content is avoided. We continue to support the development of staff and councillors in their media and social media training to maintain and develop a consistent and authoritative voice of the council.

Pre-election period

The council itself, as opposed to its political administration, must be politically neutral in its communications during pre-election periods. Administrators must factor in how content may be perceived, regardless of original intent.

Wide appeal

It is important for a balanced content schedule to appeal to as many residents as possible via:

- › The time of day a post is scheduled
- › Formality and tone of post
- › Use of emojis/imagery
- › Choice of channel

A timely response

Comments which require a response should receive one as soon as possible. Standard practice should be to thank the user for commenting and refer to the website for further information or directing to Customer Services if an answer is not immediately available.



Third party activity - complaints, negativity, spam and content removal

Complaints: If a customer/resident has a complaint this should be acknowledged and responded to, often by suggesting a contact with Customer Services through the usual channels, thus making the conversation personal. This also helps with privacy requirements under GDPR and moves the complainant into our approved processes.

SKDC decisions can divide opinion: It is usually best practice not to respond to negative comments, although if a genuine question is asked an answer should be provided.

South Kesteven District Council reserves the right to remove unsuitable content:

- › Comments with explicit language are automatically removed
- › A list of words that trigger automatic comment removal has been generated (including 'hate' words and profanity). This is added to in response to specific 'spam' messaging
- › Automatically hidden comments can be viewed and reinstated by the admin

The Council can also:

- › Proactively hide negative posts/comments
- › Automatically block the use of specific words (including profanity)
- › Automatically prevent images being posted by visitors to our feed
- › Proactively delete posts/comments that are abusive, misleading or may offend users
- › Ban a user from interacting with the page



Improving interaction

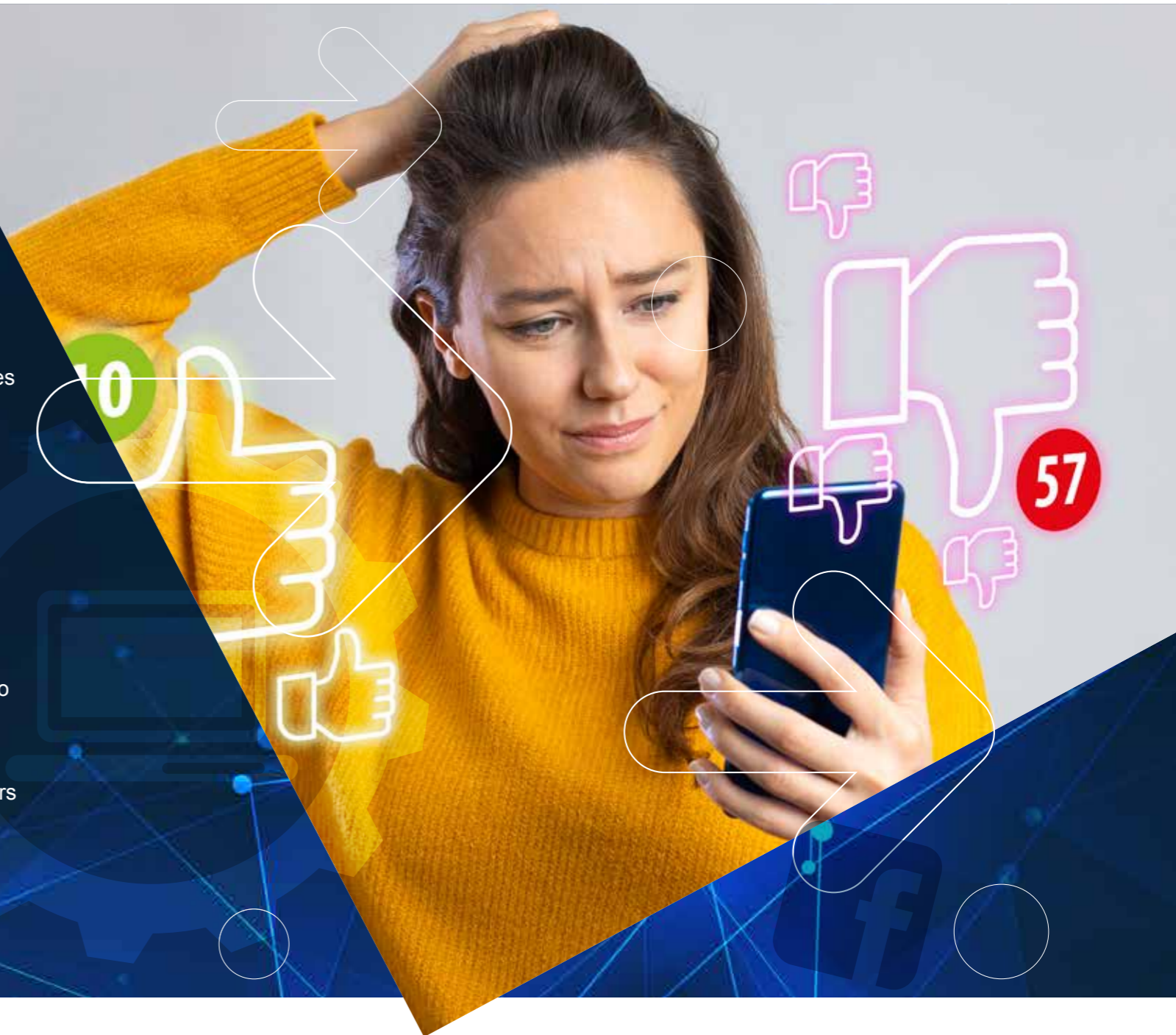
Someone who demonstrates sustained trolling of our social media feeds by, for example, repeatedly posting spam, negative comments, or being abusive to other users or SKDC team members, can be prevented from interacting with the page.

Blocking a user is not a tool that should be used frequently. Users should not be blocked simply because they leave one negative review or comment on our page.

The process should include providing the user with a warning before blocking them. If they ignore the warning and continue to engage in behaviours like those above, they can be blocked, either for a limited period or indefinitely.

Acceptable use

- › Content should be related to either the post or the site
- › Obscene or offensive language should be avoided entirely
- › Illegal content must not be referenced
- › Copyright laws should be followed at all times
- › Comments should not be deliberately misleading
- › Users should not disclose personal information publicly, such as names, emails, addresses or phone numbers. If they wish to contact us regarding an issue with their property, they may disclose information but only within our private messaging service
- › Replies to other residents must not be threatening, abusive or discriminatory in any way
- › There should be no sexual content or links to sexual content
- › There should be no content that could compromise the safety of the Council, the Council's technical systems, or staff members



SKDC's current social media platforms

Facebook: A platform for content sharing which is more personal than other channels.

www.facebook.com/southkdc

Twitter: Speaks to organisations more than people, allowing for effective networking potential.

twitter.com/southkesteven

YouTube: For video content. Currently used for sharing SKDC committee meetings.

www.youtube.com/c/SouthKestevenGovUk

LinkedIn: A network for business individuals, organisations, for sharing SKDC achievements, business-related news and job vacancies.

www.linkedin.com/company/559466

Social media metrics

Metrics used to measure progress on the above include

- > Followers – building an audience
- > User engagement – clicks on call to action
- > Organic reach and impressions
- > Shares

Looking ahead

We are changing the way services are delivered across the Council by becoming more digital, with an emphasis on helping residents interact and complete tasks with us at a time and place that suits them, such as paying bills and commenting on, or submitting, planning applications.

A redesigned and more user-friendly website will be an essential component of this change and should be a priority. The use of different social media channels such as Instagram and TikTok will also be investigated.

Responsibility for social media activity is currently shared by two members of the Communications Team who monitor, populate and refresh all channels to ensure they remained relevant.

Contact Details

Alternative formats are available on request:
audio, large print and Braille

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