Selsey Community Forum
Communications Policy

Policy Statement

The aim of this Policy is to provide a framework for communications which will allow Selsey Community Forum to:

- Achieve its mission.
- Raise awareness of Selsey Community Forum and what it does.
- Engage effectively with its target audiences.
- Demonstrate the success of its work.
- Deal effectively with partners and other organisations.

Communications

There are two target audiences for Selsey Community Forum communications:

- **External**: The local community, both in Selsey and the wider Manhood Peninsula, as well as statutory organisations, partners, potential partners and funders.
- **Internal**: Selsey Community Forum Trustees, staff and volunteers.

Regular or occasional means of communications will normally be utilised:

- Website.
- Newsletters.
- Occasional articles and press releases for publication in local media.
- Occasional interviews on local radio.
- Social media.
- YouTube.
- Promotional leaflets for individual Selsey Community Forum services.
- Publicity material displayed in the Selsey Care Shop.
- Internal and external correspondence, both letters and emails.
- Reports for Trustees.
- Minutes or notes of meetings.
- Events.

Responsibilities

To ensure the coherence and quality of communications released by Selsey Community Forum to its target audiences, all Trustees and staff and any volunteers producing communications for either internal or external audiences should be made aware of this policy. Where it exists, suitable material from reports, briefs and performance indicators that are produced as part of Selsey Community Forum's operations, should be used as source documents. To promote efficiency and reduce effort as far as reasonably possible, material should be suitable for using directly in as many channels as reasonably possible. Articles should be produced so that they can directly or, at least, with little amendment, be reproduced for different mediums. Selsey Community Forum will identify an appropriate person or role with responsibility for overseeing its website, social media accounts and other official communication channels. Only individuals authorised by the Charity may publish or approve content on behalf of Selsey Community Forum.

When producing any form of communication, all Selsey Community Forum Trustees, staff and volunteers should be informed by the following guidance and meet the subsequent requirements, particularly those related to social media.

Guidance

To present a consistent image, communications with both external and internal audiences should be of equal standard over all mediums and there should be no contradiction between different mediums. All communications, including

internal emails, reports and notes of meetings should:

- Use plain, simple English with short sentences and paragraphs.
- Avoid the use of acronyms.
- Be relevant, factually correct, sensitive and timely.
- Enable meaningful engagement with partners and other external organisations.
- Recognise the importance and value of engaging with Trustees, staff, volunteers and service users.
- Ensure that Selsey Community Forum listens to service users, acts on information received when appropriate and provides feedback.
- Reflect the principles of confidentiality, data protection and other relevant legislation. Personal, confidential or sensitive information must not be included in any communication unless there is a clear and lawful reason to do so and the disclosure has been appropriately authorised.
- Where practical, be accessible by those with disability, impairment or sensory loss.

Requirements

All communications intended for the external audience (including emails) should bear the Selsey Community Forum logo and, where appropriate, utilise the 'corporate' colours of blue and green. Personnel producing articles and other material intended for external audiences should clear them with the Communications Team before publication.

The Press and Other Media

Selsey Community Forum welcomes enquiries from the press and media and recognises that a good relationship with the press helps effective communication within the community. Equally, Selsey Community Forum recognises that taking a proactive approach to communication ensures information is made available to the community in a timely manner and is accessible via as many media sources as possible, including social media platforms.

Media enquiries should be referred to the Chair of Trustees or another person specifically authorised to speak on behalf of Selsey Community Forum. Trustees, staff and volunteers must not provide statements, comments or interviews on behalf of the Charity unless they have been authorised to do so.

Social Media

Social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp can bring significant benefits to Selsey Community Forum, particularly for building relationships with the external audience and communicating with the internal audience. However, the use of social media requires safeguards; the following applies to Trustees, staff and volunteers:

- Personal use of social media during working time should be reasonable and must not interfere with work duties or the effective operation of the Charity. Personal social media accounts should not normally be accessed using Selsey Community Forum systems where this is restricted by the Charity's IT arrangements. Any monitoring of internet, email or social media use will be carried out only where there is a legitimate purpose and in a lawful, necessary, proportionate and transparent manner, in accordance with applicable data protection legislation, the Charity's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice.
- The Trustees are to approve in advance any new Selsey Community Forum page on any social media platform or other forum.
- Trustees, staff and volunteers must not publish content that could reasonably cause serious reputational harm to the Charity, disclose confidential information, amount to bullying, harassment or discrimination, or otherwise breach applicable law or Charity policies.
- Social media content must not be defamatory, discriminatory, harassing, threatening or otherwise unlawful.
- Confidentiality, particularly in relation to Trustees, staff, volunteers and service users must be upheld.
- Photographs, video or other identifiable images of individuals must only be used where there is an appropriate lawful basis and any required consent or permission has been obtained, in accordance with the Charity's Data Protection Policy, Privacy Notice and safeguarding arrangements.
- Social media accounts must be protected by strong, unique passwords and, where available, multi-factor authentication. Login details must only be accessible to authorised users and must be changed promptly where there is a security concern, change of authorised personnel or suspected compromise.
- The Communications Team can remove any social media post from a Selsey Community Forum page on any forum that they consider to be inappropriate.
- Advice on using social media sites is at Appendix 1 to this Policy.

Where Selsey Community Forum operates a separate Social Media Policy, that policy should be read alongside this section. In the event of any inconsistency, the more specific Social Media Policy will apply.

Emails

All email communication by staff and related to the Charity's business is to be sent through a Selsey Community Forum email address. Charity email accounts must be used in accordance with the Charity's Data Protection, IT Security and Confidentiality requirements. It is preferable for Trustees to do the same. An individual should be appointed to be responsible for issuing and administering Selsey Community Forum email addresses.

Copyright

Selsey Community Forum respects and operates within copyright laws.

- No copyrighted material owned by third parties is to be published in any Selsey Community Forum communication unless permitted in writing by that third party.
- Where appropriate, credit for text and photos is to be given.
- Material found online must not be copied, reproduced, adapted or republished unless Selsey Community Forum has permission, an appropriate licence, or another lawful basis for doing so. The availability of a sharing function does not necessarily permit wider reproduction of the material.

Events

Where reasonably possible, suitable banners and marketing materials should be made available for use at events and activities involving Selsey Community Forum.

Other Matters

All staff and volunteers are to be provided with appropriate induction training. This Policy should be read alongside Selsey Community Forum's Data Protection Policy, Privacy Notice, IT Security/Digital Safety Policy, Social Media Policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Confidentiality Policy and any applicable Safeguarding Policies.

This Policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where there is a significant change in legislation, data protection guidance, communication channels, technology or the Charity's operational arrangements.

Version Control

Version Number	Date of Update	Amendments
1.0	October 2025	Policy reviewed
2.0	October 2026	Reviewed and updated in line with current guidance

Appendix 1: Advice on Using Social Media

Regardless of which social networks you are using, or whether you are using business or personal accounts, following these simple rules helps avoid the most common pitfalls:

- **Know the social network.** You should spend time becoming familiar with the social network before contributing. It is important to read any FAQs and understand what is and is not acceptable on a network before posting messages or updates.
- **If unsure, do not post it.** You should err on the side of caution when posting to social networks. If you feel an update or message might cause complaints or offence, or be otherwise unsuitable, you should not post it.
- **Be thoughtful and polite.** You should adopt the same level of courtesy used when communicating via email or face-to-face conversations.
- **Don't make promises without checking.** Some social networks are very public, so you should not make any commitments or promises on behalf of Selsey Community Forum without checking that the Charity can deliver on the promises.
- **Handle complex queries via other channels.** Social networks are not a good place to resolve complicated enquiries and service user issues.
- **Don't escalate things.** It is easy to post a quick response to a contentious status update and then regret it. You should always take the time to think before responding and hold back if they are in any doubt at all. Take the discussion off-line out of the public domain.
- **Look out for security threats.** You should be on guard for social engineering and phishing attempts where scammers attempt to use deception to obtain information. Be aware also, that social networks are used to distribute spam and malware. Avoid clicking links in posts, updates and direct messages that look suspicious.

Social media accounts can be used for many different purposes. In general, you should only post updates and messages or otherwise use these accounts when that use is clearly in line with Selsey Community Forum's overall objectives. For instance, staff may use the Charity's social media accounts to:

- Respond to customer enquiries and requests for help.
- Share blog posts, articles and other content created by Selsey Community Forum.
- Share insightful articles, videos, media and other content relevant to the service.
- Provide followers with an insight into what goes on at Selsey Community Forum.
- Support new project launches and other initiatives.
- Listen to and participate in conversations.
- If necessary, ensure your private social media account does not represent Selsey Community Forum's views or opinions.

To be a safe, responsible social media user, you must not:

- Post messages, status updates or links to material or content that is inappropriate such as pornography, racial or religious slurs, gender-specific comments, information encouraging criminal skills or terrorism, or materials relating to cults, gambling and illegal drugs. Inappropriate content also covers any text, images or other media that could reasonably offend someone because of race, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law.
- Post, upload, forward or link to spam, junk email or chain emails and messages.
- Share links to illegal copies of music, films, games or other software.
- Use social media for any illegal or criminal activities.
- Broadcast unsolicited views on social, political, religious or other non-business related matters.
- Discuss colleagues, service users or partners without their approval.
- Share or link to any content or information that could be considered confidential.

It is important to maintain confidentiality and you should be aware of the security and data protection issues that can arise from using social media.