

## Corporate Social Networking Policy

Approved By: Council

Approval Date: February 21, 2017

Effective Date: ~~December 17, 2019~~ September 20, 2022

Revision Date: ~~December 17, 2019~~ September 20, 2022

### Policy Statement

The Township of Douro-Dummer recognizes the importance of engaging with the public to share information online through social networking sites.

This policy establishes acceptable guidelines for maintaining and updating the Township's social networking sites to improve communication with the community served while protecting the reputation of the Municipality.

**Purpose** – This policy provides guidance and establishes the acceptable usage and guidelines for posting and monitoring the Township of Douro-Dummer's social networking sites while preserving the reputation of the Township.

**Goal** – To promote the advancement of the Township of Douro-Dummer and to inform the general public via social networking sites of ongoing and upcoming events within the community and other information pursuant to the Township.

**Application** – This policy applies to all staff who have authorized access to the Township's social networking platforms.

**Scope and Responsibility** – All Township employees must read this policy and all authorized users must seek any necessary clarification before operating the Township's social networking sites. The Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate, will ensure all Township employees review this policy and will implement and enforce the conditions outlined herein.

### Definitions

**Authorized Individuals** – Employees of the Municipality authorized to use the Township's social networking sites, will be at the discretion of the Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate. These personnel are outlined in Appendix A.

**Facebook** - Is a free social networking website that allows users to post comments, share photographs and links to news or other interesting content on the Web, play games, chat live, and even stream live video. Facebook allows users to create events

where invitations can be sent along with event information and tracking capability. Shared content can be made publicly accessible, or it can be shared only among a select group of contacts, or with a single person.

**Hacking** – Occurs when an unauthorized individual gains access to the Township’s social networking accounts, whether they be an employee not granted access to these accounts or other persons outside of the corporation.

**Instagram** – Instagram is a free, online photo-sharing application and social network platform.

**Posts** – Can be information, articles, pictures, links, videos or any form of communication posted to the Township’s social networking sites by authorized individuals.

**Social Networking Sites** – Are an online platform that allows users to create a public profile and interact with other users on the given website.

**Twitter** – Is a free social networking microblogging services that allows users to broadcast short posts, totalling 140 characters or less, known as tweets. Twitter users can broadcast tweets, follow other users and reply to followers.

**YouTube** – Is a free video-hosting website that allows members to store and share video content. Users can share videos, watch and comment on content.

**Exclusions:** None.

**References & Related Policies:**

Code of Conduct Policy  
Complaint Handling Policy  
Retention Policy  
Technology Policy  
Website Policy

Appendix to Social Networking Usage Policy

- (a) List of Municipal employees granted access to social networking platforms
- (b) Pre-approved customer service responses
- (c) Policy Agreement
- (d) Social Networking Disclaimer
- (e) Photo Release Agreement
- (f) Approved Accounts to Follow

**Consequences of Non-Compliance:** It is important that all employees are in compliance with the appropriate procedures as set out by the Township. Failure to

comply with this policy may result in disciplinary actions. See the disciplinary process section of this policy for a list of consequences for non-compliance and possible litigation.

**Review Cycle:** This policy will be reviewed when deemed necessary by the Chief Administrative Officer, their alternate or Council.

### Background

At the October 14<sup>th</sup> 2015, Council Meeting, Council proposed in Resolution Number 426-2015 in which the Township agreed to use their social networking sites in conjunction with the new website. Based on this Resolution, the Township plans to begin with Twitter and YouTube as the primary social networking sites and later consider Facebook as a platform option.

Further to that Council passed the following Resolution on December 17, 2019:

**Resolution Number 533-2019**

Moved by: Councillor Watson

Seconded by: Councillor Watt

That the revised Social Networking Policy A-25 be approved and further that Council authorize the Chief Building Official to establish and maintain an Instagram account for the Township Building Department. Carried

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### Procedures

The following steps must be adhered to in order to implement this policy:

The Township's Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate will appoint positions approved to post on the Township's social networking sites based on operational responsibilities, to ensure information shared is consistent with this policy. ~~These appointed positions will first be approved by Council before access is given to these accounts.~~

**Approved Content and Usage:**

Authorized individuals must understand that the Township's social networking sites are extensions of the Township's information network and individuals must comply with all existing Township policies when posting and engaging with the public on the Township's social networking sites. All authorized individuals may use the social networking sites during regular business and operating hours for the following:

- To ~~post pre-approved~~ content
- To provide information on Township events, services, Public Health and Safety concerns and Emergency Services etc.
- To share information and recruit volunteers etc.
- To direct individuals to appropriate communication mediums
- To interact with others to build the Township's online social network presence
- To enhance citizen engagement, ~~which may require posting content outside of the preapproved material so long as it adheres to the requirements established in this policy~~
- To remove content when necessary
- To monitor the Township's social networking sites
- To repost commentary from outside organizations so long as the information is factual, in line with the Township's goals and missions and does not contradict other sections of this policy. ~~For a list of these organizations see the attached list.~~

      
In order to open a new social networking platform under the Township's name, authorized users must:

- Demonstrate the need for the specific tool and why it is required to increase operational activities
- Demonstrate the benefit(s)
- Demonstrate that content posted will be consistent with the Township's standards and policies
- Receive approval by the Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate before additional resources are opened

The Township of Douro-Dummer website will remain the Township's predominant internet presence for in-depth information. As a result, all social networking sites will direct visitors back to the Township's website as the primary tool for information.

The Township of Douro-Dummer will have a single presence on the various social networking sites. ~~If a and any individual~~ Department, Board or Committee of the Township ~~feels that it is necessary that wishes~~ to maintain a separate social networking presence, they must make a request to the Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate. This request must be made in writing and the following must be demonstrated:

- The type of information that will be conveyed on the Department's, Board's or Committee's social networking sites and why it cannot be done through the Township's account
- The persons responsible for maintaining and updating these platforms
- A list of the proposed social networking sites usernames

The Department, Board or Committee recognizes that by opening a social networking platform under a Department, Board or Committee name, affiliated with the Township,

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that only authorized personnel can have access to these social networking sites and that these individuals must adhere to the guidelines of this policy to avoid disciplinary action.

Authorized users must ensure that the following is utilized on all Township social networking platforms:

- A link to the Township's social networking disclaimer
- Identify as a Township's social networking site, including the Township's logo, or the logo for the particular Department, Board or Committee
- A link to the Township website or Department, Board or Committee website if applicable
- The Township, or Department, Board or Committee's contact information
- The dates and times during which the social networking platforms are monitored

Authorized users will abide by the following practices:

- Post up-to-date information in a consistent manner
- Respond to feedback while demonstrating superior customer service by using one of the pre-approved responses as outlined in Appendix B or similar messaging
- Welcome public feedback and respond using superior customer service and pre-approved responses to avoid escalating situations and being confrontational

Authorized users are not required to respond to post that are inappropriate, and in these instances, must follow the proper procedures as outlined in this policy to remove the content.

The Township may receive service requests through their various social networking platforms, which can have various concerns that include but are not limited to:

- Privacy issues for residents who may provide personal information in service requests made online in public forums.
- Resource implications for staff who may receive an influx in service requests via social networking sites and the expectancy by the public for immediate action.
- Expectations for responses outside of regular business hours.

To resolve these issues, inquiries must be directed back towards other communication methods including telephone, email, or in-person discussion to resolve these issues while maintaining the privacy of citizens.

**Tone and Accuracy:**

All information must be factual and objective, as well as oriented to represent the values of the Municipality. Employees must not upload speculative or subjective insight. Authorized individuals must ensure that shared content is in a tone that is free from

personal or political thoughts, beliefs, or opinions and is reflective of the attitudes, qualities and congruence of the Township's goals and mission to the community.

**Professionalism and Transparency:**

All employees are required to provide high quality of work wherein accuracy, professionalism and timeliness for completion are of prime importance when posting, sharing and commenting etc. on the Township's social networking platforms. This policy serves to protect the Township's reputation and ensure consistency and professionalism in how the Township and its employees communicate about the Township's business with the public. The Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate reserves the right to add or remove services and/or functions to any or all social networking sites at any time. The Township will take all reasonable efforts to have the official social networking pages verified in order to reassure followers that it is the Township's official social networking profile, which can increase trust in the information shared.

**Approved Accounts to Follow:**

For Facebook, the accounts to follow shall ~~be limited to~~ include those on to the list provided in Appendix F.

For Twitter and Instagram, the accounts to follow shall include the list provided in Appendix F.

~~however,~~ For all social networking sites, additional professional accounts may be followed provided that they meet the intent of this policy. Such accounts would include other levels of government, local local agencies, local businesses, contractors, suppliers, manufacturers, associations and other influencers that post respectful, appropriate content. Approval to add additional accounts may be approved by either the Chief Administrative Officer, Clerk, Deputy Clerk, or Chief Building Official. Content that is to be reposted from another account must meet the guidelines of this policy.

**Privacy and Security:**

Authorized individuals are responsible for the use of the social networking sites usernames and passwords and must take all reasonable precaution to prevent others from being able to use these accounts. Authorized personnel must not give or share password(s) or protected and private resources. Authorized individuals do not have permission to change the Township's social networking sites usernames and/or password(s) unless authorized to do so by the Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate. To ensure the privacy and security of information, authorized individuals should ensure social networking sites are shut down and logged out of when they plan on being away from their desk or office for extended periods of time. Authorized individuals may not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the Township's social networking platforms.

All employees must be committed to the protection of privacy of citizen as required under *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and will hold in

confidence all related information learned in the course of their duties. The Township's social networking sites will disclose that these sites are third party sites with their own terms and conditions and will direct patrons to consult these external policies to ensure they agree to have their information used and stored accordingly.

All images shared online must be done so in accordance with the photo release agreement, which must be signed by the photographer and all individuals in the photo; if an individual is under the age of 18, then the agreement must be signed by a parent or legal guardian. Exceptions to this are crowd shots and photographs where the individual is not recognizable. Without this consent, no images can be shared on the Township's social networking sites.

**Confidentiality:**

No employee can release any private or confidential information on the Township's social networking platforms, which includes but is not limited to information on Township employees, elected or appointed officials and/or official Township business. Information posted on the Township's social networking sites is done so on an open forum and regardless of previously established privacy settings authorized individuals should post information assuming that their commentary is publicly available.

**Harassment and Discrimination:**

All employees have the right of freedom from harassment and the right to equal treatment in the workplace by the employer or agent of the employer by another employee because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age and record of offences, marital status, family status, or capability. Harassment means engaging in a course of vexatious conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.

All authorized employees must not promote, post or engage in harassing or discriminatory conduct towards employees of the Township, community, or any followers of the Township's social networking sites. For further information on harassment and discrimination, as well as associated disciplinary action(s) please consult the Township's Code of Conduct Policy.

**Data Retention:**

All content and posts shared on the Township's social networking platforms must be stored in the same capacity as other Township business records, and in accordance with the retention policy and schedule.

**Inappropriate Materials and Inappropriate Usage:**

The Township's social networking platforms will limit two-way communication, such as disabling comments when this function is available on the social networking platform. Authorized users of the Township's social networking platforms must not enable any functions that have previously been disabled without approval first being obtained from

the Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate. In the event that these functions are unable to be disabled, and patrons comment on posts made by the Township, authorized individuals must consult the appendix of this policy for pre-approved responses. This is especially important when the Township encounters a negative online comment. Failure to comply, or responding inappropriately may result in a lack of privileges and/or disciplinary action.

If authorized users feel that a comment is needed that is not included in the pre-authorized list of responses the user should first obtain permission from the Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate before such comment can be posted. In the event that the Township encounters persistent and continuous negative interactions online from patrons, authorized users have the responsibility to block the user from viewing the social networking page, this would occur when comments are harassing and/or discriminatory in nature.

Social networking platform comments are as public as if the same comment is made directly to the media or at a public forum and therefore authorized users must ensure the highest standards when commenting online. As a result, authorized users are limited in the profiles that can be followed on the Township's social networking page(s). Users that are political, discriminatory, harassing, promote illegal activity, and/or share negative content must not be followed.

The Township reserves the right to remove any content from the Township's social networking pages without notice, monitor information posted on any social networking sites by any individual or groups at any time, withdraw access to social networking by Departments, Boards, Committees or ~~individuals-staff~~ at any time for failure to comply with requirements of the policy and applies to personal use of social networking where that use relates to the businesses or operations of the Township. The Township reserves the right to remove any posts and will refrain from posting content that

- Provides personal information of individuals and information that is protected under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Promoting, perpetuating or fostering discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status with regard to public assistance, nationality, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation
- Creating, accessing, sending, posting or loading information that constitutes threats, harassment, libel, slander, defamation or similar acts
- A personal attack on an individual or specific group
- Are profane or abusive
- Are sexually explicit or links to content that is of a sexually explicit manner
- Conducting or encouraging illegal activity
- Attempting to advertise, promote or sell products or services of an individual or business
- Promoting a candidate for Municipal, Provincial or Federal election
- Compromising the safety or security of the public or public system

- Violating a legal ownership interest of another party
- Impersonating others
- Not complying with Municipal, Provincial or Federal legislation
- Violating privacy and confidentiality legislation, including discussion of items in closed sessions meetings
- Using these sites beyond the scope of this policy
- Any other action that is deemed to be inappropriate by the Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate

In the event that the abovementioned content is posted to the Township's social networking sites the following actions must be taken immediately:

- Document details about the incident, which can include screenshots of the material, user information, date and time etc.
- Take immediate action to remove the content
- Report the incident to the Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate
- All incidents of a serious nature must be reported to the Chief Administrative Officer either during the incident or following incident response
- An incident that does not require the immediate involvement of the Chief Administrative Officer must be reported on as soon as action has been taken to address the incident or if outside of business hours the next day

If any authorized individual inadvertently opens any abovementioned information they should immediately delete the information and inform their supervisor of the occurrence. This will protect authorized individuals against any allegations that they have intentionally violated this policy.

Authorized individuals are not required to monitor the Township's social networking sites outside of regular business hours and must not login to these sites from personal computers, tablets and/or smartphones unless first authorized by the Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate. If authorized individuals become aware of a situation that requires immediate attention, for example any of the abovementioned content is shared and this content is threatening to the Township's reputation, they are authorized to take appropriate steps to remove this content, as outlined in the policy. This would exclude responding to requests for service or negative feedback. This action is saved for serious threatening content, which is damaging to both the Township's reputation and the public. This incident should be disclosed to the Chief Administrative Officer as soon as possible or at a latest by the next business day. Employees are reminded that they do not need to monitor the accounts outside of work hours.

Employees and Council Members are welcome to like and follow the Township's social networking sites from their personal accounts and are encouraged to like and share content that has already been officially posted. However, employees must not post to the Township's account if they are not using the Township's official social networking sites. For example, if the Township were to Tweet "Join us for Adult and Senior Skating

today from 1pm to 2pm at the Warsaw Community Centre, \$2.00 per person”, and a Township employee were to comment “But 12pm to 1pm works better for me” on this post from a personal social networking account, there can be confusion amongst the public. This employee is associated with the Township and is providing contradictory information, therefore it is essential that all official business relating to the Township is posted by the Township’s official social networking accounts.

**Termination of Social Networking Accounts:**

In the event that an unauthorized individual has hacked the Township’s social networking these accounts must be suspended immediately. If this individual is an employee of the Township, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

This breach should be reported to the Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate, immediately after the employee has followed the appropriate steps to remove the unauthorized content. In the event that this behaviour continues, for example the Township’s social networking sites are continuously hacked by unauthorized individuals, or there are negative comments shared online, the Township’s social networking sites may be terminated until further notice or indefinitely at the discretion of the Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate.

In the event that the Township’s social networking accounts are no longer required and/or cannot be maintained properly etc., these accounts may be shut-down at the discretion of the Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate. If there is any confusion about the procedures in this policy, please consult the Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate, for clarification before proceeding.

**Disciplinary Process:**

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in a loss of privileges and/or disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, depending on the severity of the infraction. In the event that an authorized individual violates this policy, appropriate discipline will be initiated by the Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate but only after a thorough investigation into the details of the violation. Appropriate legal authorities may be contacted if there is suspicion of illegal activities and potential litigation may arise out of non-compliance.

**Appendix A to Corporate Social Networking Policy**

**List of persons approved to have access to the Township's social networking accounts:**

**Authorized to Post:** Chief Administrative Officer, Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Administrative Assistants, other ~~staff members~~ ~~Administrative Assistants~~ as approved by Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate

**Department(s), Board(s) and/or Committee(s)**

- (1) **Douro-Dummer Public Library Social Networking Accounts:** Library CEO and Library Assistant
- (2) **Douro-Dummer Building Department Instagram Account:** Chief Building Official or alternate

**Appendix B to Corporate Social Networking Policy**

**Pre-approved Customer Service Responses**

**Positive Feedback:**

We agree! Thanks for the feedback.

We're glad you enjoyed this event! Hopefully we will see you at future events!

Thanks so much! Hopefully we will see you at future community events!

**Criticism:**

We're sorry to hear, but thank you for your feedback. If you wish to discuss further please contact the Municipal Office directly.

**Service Requests:**

In order to properly process your request please contact the Municipal Office directly by phone, email or in person.

**Appendix C Social Media Policy Agreement**

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read and understand the Township of Douro-Dummer's social networking policy and agree to adhere to these terms and conditions. I acknowledge and understand that violations of this policy are subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of the Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate.

### **Appendix D: Social Networking Disclaimer**

The Township of Douro-Dummer welcomes your engagement through our social networking accounts. Please be aware that these sites are independent from the Township and as a result have their own terms of service and privacy policies. The Township of Douro-Dummer is not responsible for the operation of third party social networking sites and can in no way guarantee the privacy of individuals who access and post content using these forums. In an effort to ensure that you agree to have your information used in accordance with these policies, please review the terms and conditions of these sites. Please be aware that this is a public domain and personal information related to Township inquiries are discouraged from being shared on these sites, as the Township can in no way guarantee your privacy. These social networking accounts are used to increase community engagement and in no way are an attempt to replace official Township requests for service. For official Township related inquiries please contact the Municipal Office directly at (705)-652-8392, email us at [General Inquiries](#), visit our website at [Douro-Dummer Township Homepage](#) or in person at 894 South Street, Warsaw Ontario K0L 3A0.

Please be aware, that these accounts are only monitored during regular Township business hours. We welcome your participation, however, the Township reserves the right to remove any content that for example:

- Promote, perpetuate or foster discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status with regard to public assistance, nationality, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation
- Creating, accessing, sending, posting or loading information that constitutes threats, harassment, libel, slander, defamation or similar acts
- A personal attack on an individual or specific group
- Being profane or abusive
- Being sexually explicit or links to content that is of a sexually explicit manner
- Conducting or encouraging illegal activity
- Attempting to advertise, promote or sell products or services of an individual or business without previous approval
- Promoting a candidate for Municipal, Provincial or Federal election
- Compromising the safety or security of the public or public system
- Violating a legal ownership interest of another party
- Impersonating others
- Not complying with Municipal, Provincial or Federal legislation
- Violating privacy and confidentiality legislation, including discussion of items in closed sessions meetings
- Any other action that is deemed to be inappropriate by the Township employee's or the Chief Administrative Officer or their alternate

**Appendix E to Corporate Social Networking Policy  
Photo Release Agreement**



# Township of Douro-Dummer

## Photo Release Agreement

I \_\_\_\_\_ (print name) do hereby give the **Township of Douro-Dummer**, its assigns, licensees, employees and legal representative the sole and irrevocable consent to use my image(s) or likeness in all forms and media for any and all promotions, advertising or such other purpose as the **Township of Douro-Dummer** may determine. I hereby waive the right to inspect, approve or alter any use of my image or likeness by the **Township of Douro-Dummer** pursuant to this waiver. I certify I am eighteen years of age or older and that I have read and fully understood the terms of this agreement and that I have been advised to seek independent legal advice with respect to the execution of this agreement and have chosen not to do so.

Dated at The Township of Douro-Dummer this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Photographer  
 Model  
 Parent/Guardian of  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Township of Douro-Dummer Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Image Name

**Personal Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix F: Approved Accounts to Follow**

1. Peterborough County
2. All Townships in Peterborough County
3. Ontario Provincial Police
4. Douro-Dummer Public Library
- ~~5. CHEX News~~
- ~~6. Fleming College~~
- ~~7.5. Trent University Local Post Secondary Institutions~~
- ~~8.6. Provincial and Federal Ministries and Third Party or Transfer Payment Organizations~~
- ~~9.7. City of Peterborough~~
- ~~10.8. Environment Canada~~
- ~~11. Peterborough Examiner~~
- ~~12. The Weather Network~~
- ~~13.9. Hydro One Local Restaurants and Resorts~~
- ~~14. Pine Vista Resort~~
- ~~15. Irwin Inn~~
- ~~16. Lantern Restaurant~~
- ~~17. Stoney Lake Market~~
- ~~18.10. Camp Kawartha~~
- ~~19. Jewel Just Fine Wine~~
- ~~20.11. Wildfire Golf Course Local golf courses~~
- ~~21. Lakefield College~~
- ~~22. Warsaw Public School~~
- ~~23. St. Joseph's School~~
- ~~24.12. PVNCCDSB Local public and private school and area school boards~~
- ~~25.13. Peterborough and Kawartha Tourism~~
- ~~14. Sustainable Peterborough~~
- ~~26.15. Local Radio Stations and Respected News Sources such as local papers~~
- ~~27. South Street BBQ~~
- ~~28. Country 105~~
- ~~29. Wolf 101.5~~
- ~~30. Energy 99.7~~
- ~~31. Fresh Radio 100.5~~
- ~~32.16. Peterborough Public Health~~
- ~~33.17. Council Members~~
- ~~34. Mayor~~
- ~~35.18. Peterborough Employment Resource Centre~~
- ~~36.19. Peterborough Police~~
- ~~37. Kawartha Now~~
- ~~38. Peterborough Careers~~
- ~~39. PTBO Canada~~
- ~~40.20. Ontario Accessibility~~
- ~~41.21. Parks Ontario and Parks Canada~~
- ~~42.22. Trent-Severn Waterway~~
- ~~43.23. Peterborough and Kawartha Economic Development~~
- ~~44.24. MPAC Ontario~~
- ~~45.25. Peterborough Regional Health Centre~~
- ~~46.26. Douro Doings~~
- ~~47. Arrowsmith Program~~
- ~~48.27. Ontario Trails~~
- ~~49.28. Riverview Park and Zoo~~
- ~~50.29. Peterborough Museum and Archives~~
- ~~51.30. Fire Marshall~~
- ~~52.31. Enbridge Local Utilities~~