Social Media Procedures

Responsibilities and breach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their compliance with this policy.

Participation in social media on behalf of FOTETI is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect.

Breaches of policy or inappropriate behaviour may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Please refer to FOTETI Policies for further information on our processes. Staff or volunteers who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach policies should seek advice from the designated member of the Management Committee.

Which social media channels do we use?

FOTETI uses the following social media channels:
Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, Linked In, Bluesky, YouTube.

FOTETI has a Facebook and Instagram account which it uses to share news with supporters and to encourage people to become involved in our work in the local community

FOTETI has a TikTok account which has been used for amusing stories to promote the sale of shares and donations for the purchase of the Elm Tree Inn
FOTETI has an X and Bluesky account which is used for publicity and connection with the hospitality industry
FOTETI has a Linked In account which is used to connect with other local organisations and businesses
YouTube account is currently dormant.

Code of conduct headlines

• I will not insult, harass, bully or intimidate individuals or organisations
• I will respond to others 'opinions respectfully and professionally
• I will not do anything that breaches my terms of employment/voluntary role
• I will acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly using provided guidance
• I will disclose conflicts of interest where I am able
• I will not knowingly post inaccurate information
• I will link to online references and original source materials directly
• I will be considerate, kind and fair
• I will always ensure my activity does no harm to the organisation or to others
• I will champion FOTETI and its services

Using FOTETI's social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. Know our social media guardians

The designated Management Committee member is responsible for setting up and managing FOTETI's social media channels. FOTETI has overall ownership of these accounts and only those authorised to do so by the designated Management Committee member will have access to these accounts.

Any authorised user will uphold best practices for channel security with secure passwords that regularly change. Never give out the passwords for our channels without express permission.

2. Be an ambassador for our brand

Staff and volunteers must ensure they reflect FOTETI's values in what they post and use our tone of voice. Our brand guidelines set out our style that all staff and volunteers should refer to when posting content on FOTETI's social media channels. Please note only authorised users are permitted to respond to comments on our social media posts on behalf of the organisation. All posts and comments should be attributed to FOTETI and not an individual. In special cases it may be appropriate for an authorised user to make an individual comment as themselves, but this should be under the supervision, and with the approval, of the designated Management Committee member.

3. Always pause and think before posting

When posting from FOTETI's social media accounts, you must respond to comments in the voice of our organisation and not allow your own personal opinions to influence responses. Staff and volunteers must not reveal their personal opinions via our accounts by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'reposting' as FOTETI, unless it is clear that you are doing so as an individual staff member or volunteer as part of an approach agreed with FOTETI. If you are in doubt about FOTETI's position on a particular issue, please speak to the designated Management Committee member.

4. Ensure brand consistency

Staff or volunteers must not create or manage any other social media channels, groups or pages on behalf of FOTETI without express permission from the Management Committee and undertaking appropriate training as agreed. This is to ensure brand consistency for users and the appropriate safeguarding and monitoring processes are in place.

5. Remember the bigger picture and focus on the benefit

Staff and volunteers must make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for FOTETI to further our agreed purposes (either directly or indirectly, by engaging stakeholders and building our brand using our strategy). All content must accurately reflect FOTETI's agreed position.

6. Bring value to our audience(s)

Those responsible for the management of our social media accounts should answer questions as swiftly as possible to help and engage with our service users and supporters.

7. Seek permission to share

If volunteers outside of FOTETI wish to contribute content for social media, whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, they should obtain guidance and permission from the designated Management Committee member.

8. Obtain consent

Staff and volunteers must not post content about supporters, service users or partners without their, or their guardian's, express permission. If staff or and volunteers are sharing information about supporters, service users or third party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from FOTETI. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, staff and volunteers must ensure they have the written consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.

9. Put safety first

It can be challenging working on social media and there may be times where staff or volunteers could be subject to unpleasant or abusive comments directed at the organisation, our work or people. We encourage everyone who is on social media on behalf of the organisation to be aware of our safeguarding and wellbeing practices to deal with online abuse and consult with the designated Management Committee member where necessary.

It is also vital that FOTETI does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials in pursuit of social media engagement. For example, a video of a stunt or visiting an unsafe location.

10. Stick to the law

Staff and volunteers must not encourage people to break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material.

11. Remain politically neutral

FOTETI is not associated with any political organisation nor have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We can express views where appropriate on policies that impact our work and service users, but it is essential that FOTETI remains, and is seen to be, politically neutral.

We cannot endorse a political party or candidate. We must carefully manage the risk that we are perceived to have any party-political bias and should carefully consider any posts which might be perceived as such, for example, posts which talk about individual politicians or parties rather than policies.

12. Check facts and be honest

Staff and volunteers should not automatically assume that material that's shared or included in any post is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification – for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it. But think first about how to manage any risk to the organisation and its brand in doing so by consulting with the Management Committee members to craft the response.

13. Seek advice for complaints

If a complaint is made on FOTETI's social media channels, staff/volunteers should seek advice from the designated Management Committee member before responding. If they are not available, then staff/volunteers should speak to another Management Committee member.

14. Know what to do in a crisis

Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the organisation's reputation. Examples might include: an incident at the premises, or a relating to a prominent volunteer, supporter or donor.

The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the organisation or our people. The *organisation* regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of FOTETI so we can catch any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis situation, then this must be reported to the Chair immediately.

If any staff or volunteers outside of the *organisation* becomes aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on FOTETI's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the designated Management Committee member immediately. It is the responsibility of all staff/volunteers to report complaints or comments that could escalate into a crisis or have serious implications for the organisation. Only the designated Management Committee member is permitted to amend or delete content in a crisis.

[See further guidance e.g. OrganisationComms website regarding crisis communications https://www.charitycomms.org.uk/crisis-communications-for-charities]

15. Timings, schedules and rotas

It is important that social media channels are checked daily and any comments or likes are responded to where appropriate. Only matters which FOTETI has influence over, or an interest in promoting should be engaged with, in accordance with FOTETI's aims and objectives.
It is not essential to comment on every communication, and sometimes better not to respond at all, and no staff or volunteers should enter into 'conversations 'over social media channels.

16. Use AI appropriately

AI can be a valuable tool that could support our communications activities. However, staff and volunteers must ensure any AI created content adheres to aims and objectives and our brand guidelines. You must seek permission from the designated member of the Management Committee before using AI and only use approved AI tools and processes.

17. Handover ownership if your role changes

You must hand over ownership of the FOTETI group/page/account you manage to another appropriate staff member (or volunteer) if you change roles or if you leave. It is vital to maintain continuity and retention of content and followers.

Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct

1. Separate your personal views

Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive FOTETI. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of FOTETI. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about FOTETI's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: “Views are my own” or "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent FOTETI's positions, policies or opinions."

2. Take care when publishing personal views (particularly officials, ‘trustees’ or senior staff)

Those in senior management including officials / trustees and public-facing or specialist roles where they are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing FOTETI's view.

For senior roles, we expect you to take additional steps, such as:

- Being aware of your duties and responsibilities.
- Consulting your organisation’s messaging and crisis plans, being particularly cautious in how your communications as a leading figure for FOTETI may be interpreted.
- Avoiding posting any material which might be construed as contrary or conflicting with to the organisation’s co-operative mission or community work.

3. Discuss risks and conflicts of interest

Staff and Management Committee members who have a personal blog, social media profile or website which indicates in any way that they work at/for FOTETI should discuss any potential risk or conflicts of interest with the Management Committee. Similarly, staff or volunteers who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work with FOTETI should discuss any potential risk or conflicts of interest with the Management Committee.

4. Protect your personal reputation

Think about your personal reputation as well as the organisation's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be the first to correct your own mistakes.

Remember that if you have a public profile with the organisation, your personal social media accounts could be looked at by critics of the organisation, and bear this in mind when posting.

5. Use your common sense and good judgement

Be aware of your association with FOTETI and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to *the general public, colleagues, partners and funders*.

6. Don’t approach VIPs directly

FOTETI may work with several high-profile organisations and individuals, including *celebrities, journalists, politicians and donors.* Please don't approach high profile people or organisations from your personal social media accounts to ask them to support the organisation, as this could hinder any potential relationships that are being managed by FOTETI. This includes asking for reposts about the organisation.

If you have any information about high profile people or organisations that have a connection to our cause, or if there is someone who you would like to support the organisation, please speak to the designated member of the Management Committee to share the details.

7. Refer press enquiries

If a staff member or volunteer is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to FOTETI, they should talk to the designated Management Committee member immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.

8. Keep your political activity separate from the organisation

When representing *FOTETI* staff and volunteers are expected to uphold FOTETI's positioning. Staff and volunteers who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from FOTETI and understand and avoid potential risks and conflicts of interest. Volunteers should also inform the Management Committee about any such political activity, and Management Committee members should inform the Chair. As set out in point two above, senior representatives should take particular care.

9. Protect your privacy

Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. Remember that a simple ‘like ’can draw attention to your personal accounts. What you publish is widely accessible and could be around for a long time, so do consider the content, and your privacy, carefully.

All staff and volunteers who wish to engage with any of FOTETI's social media platforms are strongly advised to ensure that they set the privacy levels of their personal sites as strictly as they can and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. All staff and volunteers should keep their passwords confidential and change them often. Staff/Volunteers should not ‘friend ’or personally connect with supporters, donors or *volunteers* via social media unless explicit permission is given by designated Management Committee member.

In their own interests, staff and volunteers should be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social networking sites, such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers.

10. Help us to raise our profile (where appropriate)

We encourage staff and volunteers to share posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support FOTETI and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy (and taking into consideration the information above), we encourage staff and volunteers to do this as it helps users connect to us and raises our profile.

However, please take care to think about the reputation of the organisation. If your personal social media account is not professional or otherwise appropriate for our audiences, please do not use it to amplify or promote the organisation, as to do so brings risks both to you personally and to the organisation. Similarly, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the Management Committee member who will respond as appropriate.

11. Avoid logos or trademarks

Never use FOTETI's logos, branding or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos must be requested from the designated Management Committee member and any content created must adhere to our brand guidelines. If permission is granted, content must be approved by the designated Management Committee member before publishing.

12. Staying safe online

It can be challenging working on social media and there may be times where staff and volunteers could be subject to unpleasant or abusive comments directed at the organisation, our work or people. We encourage everyone who is on social media to be aware of the relevant safeguarding and wellbeing practices to deal with online abuse and consult with a Management Committee member where necessary.

Staff and volunteers should be vigilant regarding suspicious content or links and must not reveal personal, confidential or sensitive information about themselves, other staff members, volunteers or supporters of FOTETI. Staff and volunteers should be wary of fake accounts that may claim to be FOTETI and should immediately notify a member of the Management Committee.

Care must also be taken to ensure that any links to external sites from our social media accounts are appropriate and safe. For more information, please see our data protection policy.

Please consult our relevant policies and procedures for the safeguarding of our staff and volunteers, and of our partners and supporters:

Further guidelines: using social media in a professional and personal capacity

Defamation - https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2013/26/contents

Defamation is when a false statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published in print (such as in media publications) or online (such as Instagram Story, Facebook Live, Snapchat post). Whether staff or volunteers are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring FOTETI into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright law - https://www.gov.uk/copyright

It is critical that all staff or volunteers abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, when representing the organisation. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

Confidentiality

Any communications that staff and volunteers make must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that FOTETI is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date, or information from people who the organisation has worked with which is private.

Protection and intervention

The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. For example, Facebook. However, if a staff member or volunteer considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to a member of the Management Committee immediately.

Under 18s and vulnerable people

Young and vulnerable people face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming or radicalisation. Where known, when communicating with vulnerable or young people under 18-years-old via social media, staff and volunteers should ensure the online relationship with FOTETI follows the same rules as offline.

Staff and volunteers should be aware that children under the age of 13 should not be encouraged to create their own personal social media accounts or engage with others and are not legally allowed to use social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram or X.

Staff and volunteers should ensure that vulnerable and young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online, and given guidance on security and privacy settings as necessary. Staff and volunteers should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the vulnerable or young person and FOTETI content and other content is appropriate for them. Please refer to our *safeguarding policy*.

All staff members and volunteers have a responsibility to do everything possible to ensure that vulnerable and young people are kept safe from harm. If you come across anything online that could mean someone is at risk, you should follow FOTETI's safeguarding policies.

The Online Safety Act 2023 has introduced further measures to ensure children are protected online.

Engaging on emotive topics

FOTETI may be involved in issues that provoke strong emotions. The emotive content we share via our social media channels can engage our audiences and help us achieve our communications goals. However, it is important to plan appropriately and consider potential reputational risks to the organisation. For more information, visit the government resource called charities and social media.

Guidance on use of images

The core policy for using pictures of people on social media in the UK is that you must obtain their informed consent, particularly if they are identifiable. This is governed by a combination of data protection laws (like the UK GDPR), copyright law, and privacy rights. (See the Appendix on Image Consent)

Key Considerations Before Posting:

Copyright: The person who took the photo usually owns the copyright, but this is separate from the subject's privacy rights. The person in the photo still has rights regarding how their image is used.

Social Media Terms: When you upload a photo to a social media platform, you generally grant the platform a license to use the image according to their terms and conditions.

Metadata: Remove location data and other personal information (metadata) from images before uploading them.

It is always safest to err on the side of caution and obtain explicit, written consent to avoid legal issues or distress to the individuals involved. For further guidance, refer to the official Information Commissioner's Office website for detailed information on data protection and photography.

Friends of the Elm Tree Inn - Social Media Policy Agreement

Volunteer Agreement

I have read and understood the FOTETI social media policy. I agree to abide by the rules set out in this policy and I understand that failing to abide by this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Name:

Role:

Signed:

Date:

Checklist for Social Media Channels

What social media channels are you currently using for communications? [*Delete / select / amend as appropriate]*

Channel	**Manager(s) of channel**	**Currently in use? How do we use it and what do we use it for? Who uses it?**	**Benefits of channel**	**Risks of channel**
Facebook				
X				
Instagram				
TikTok				
YouTube				
WhatsApp				
LinkedIn				
Snapchat				
Bluesky				

Who could we consult for support?

Individual name:
Job title:
List areas of expertise / what they can help with:
Contact details: