**Reston Village Hall**

**SCIO No SCO5374**

**Social Media Policy**

Reston Village Hall (RVH) Trustees recognise that social media presents opportunities to engage with residents and service users within the local area. Alongside these opportunities it must be recognised that there are risks attached to the use of social media. Distribution of material cannot be controlled. Once posted to an initial target audience, material can be posted anywhere through the networks of each individual in that audience and beyond. This poses potential reputational risks for RVH Trustees and Members, who are volunteers, respected individuals and local residents. They may be employees of local companies or larger organisations and members of national government bodies with their own code of conduct policies. It is therefore important that users of social media understand the consequences as well as the benefits of the technology. The most important thing to remember is that social media is simply another form of communication. As such the safest course is to not say or do anything online that you would not do offline.

This applies to Trustees’ and Members’ use of social media and those individuals and groups who enter a contractual agreement to hire the Village Hall.

**In summary**:

**DO** remember that communicating by social media has the same effect as communicating verbally or in writing.

**DO NOT** say anything via social media you would not say directly to a person.

**DO** remember that anything communicated via social media may result in the Village Hall Committee cancelling your hire contract if the communication breaches Reston Village Hall Constitution; Equality and Diversity Policy, or Safeguarding policy.

**DO NOT** say or give the impression you are communicating on behalf of Reston Village Hall Committee unless expressly authorised to do so.

The objective of this policy is to protect volunteers, customers and the reputation of Reston Village Hall by providing a framework for the effective and safe use of social media.

There are specific safeguarding issues that relate to groups who work closely with children or adults at risk, that Hirers need to be aware of.

Volunteers or Hall Hirers using social media must not:

• Post comments electronically, or distribute by e-mail, anything which could cause offence or that may be considered discriminatory or anything that may be considered as bullying and harassment.

• Post statements which are bigoted, hateful or discriminatory.

• Post or distribute images, video or messages that may bring Reston Village Hall Committee into disrepute. For example, anything that might be considered indecent, pornographic, obscene or illegal.

• Post or send confidential volunteer or hall users’ information which may breach the Data Protection Act 2018 or the General Data Protection Regulation.

• Communicate with volunteers, Hall users (whether as friends on social networking sites or otherwise) in a way that could be deemed inappropriate, unprofessional or potentially breach confidence and trust.

• Post expressions of personal anger or abuse against Hall Committee Members, or other Hall users.

• Publish untrue statements about another person which could damage their reputation or working relationships.

• Make use of any confidential information gained through your role with the Village Hall.

• Comment on behalf of the Reston Village Hall Committee unless expressly authorised to do so.

• Under no circumstance should offensive comments be made about the Reston Village Hall Committee or Hall users, on the Internet. This may amount to cyber-bullying or defamation and could result in criminal or civil court proceedings.

**Cyber-bullying** Cyber-bullying is when someone or a group of people use a mobile phone or the internet to send or post text or images which may be offensive, intimidating, malicious, humiliating or insulting towards an individual or group of employees. Cyber-bullying can take many forms, for example:

• Someone continually sending messages after being asked not to.

• Sending messages that are threatening or upsetting.

• Setting up profiles on Social Networking sites with the sole purpose of making fun of someone.

• Posing as someone else for the purposes of publishing material in their name to cause offence, ridicule or humiliate others.

• Posting rumours or gossip and instigating others to dislike or gang up on the target.

• Sending abusive text messages, offensive pictures or video by mobile phone or posting them on social media sites.

**Defamation** You should consider whether a statement can be proved before writing or using it, otherwise you may be guilty of defamation. In law, the onus is on the person making the statement to establish its truth.

Defamation is the act of making a statement about a person or company that is considered to harm reputation, for example, by lowering others’ estimation of the person or company, or by causing them to lose their rank or professional standing. This statement may be made verbally or in writing. Action can also be taken against anyone repeating defamatory statements from another source, so careful checks are needed before quoting statements from other blogs or websites. This can also apply to linking to defamatory information.

**Acceptable use policy** – guidance for Hall Hires

Most online communities have their own rules and guidelines, which we will always follow. We reserve the right to remove any contributions (or ban users) that break the rules or guidelines of the relevant community:

• Be civil, tasteful and relevant.

• Do not post messages that are unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive.

• Do not swear.

• Do not post content copied from elsewhere, for which you do not own the copyright.

• Do not post the same message, or very similar messages, more than once (also called "spamming").

• Do not publicise your, or anyone else's, personal information, such as contact details.

• Do not impersonate someone else.

**Complaints** Please note that you should not rely solely on a social media platform to raise concerns. Not all platforms will be monitored continuously, especially outwith normal working hours. If you have a formal complaint about Reston Village Hall or the Committee, you must contact us directly via email.

If you have a concern about something posted on a web or social media page that the Reston Village Hall is responsible for, please contact the Reston Village Hall committee via email so they can either deal with your issue or identify and contact the profile 'owner'.

Email address: restonvh@gmail.com