



TUST - SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Executive Summary

Social media is crucial to spreading the TUST message, raising awareness of our existence and objectives and sharing information about our activities. The purpose of this document is to identify a pragmatic solution for the TUST board members on how best to approach social media communication in supporting the reputation of TUST.

Social media is a brand equaliser, it's something that even the smallest of businesses can use to get on a level playing field with corporate giants. However, whilst social media can largely be a good thing, careful consideration needs to be given to what social media channels TUST invests in as well as general posting guidelines.

TUST should use social media as an informative platform to convey TUST related information and to re-advertise all things TUFC when appropriate to do so. As well as this, TUST will convey to our supporter base that we are there to be a critical friend to TUFC and will publish any news that will threaten the long term sustainability and good governance of our club. It will also support the fans and supporter organisations of other clubs in times of trouble where appropriate to do so.

Current Activity

Facebook:

The current facebook communications are carried out via a business page, these pages are set up by businesses and organisations to get their message across to potential customers or members. There are a team of selected administrators that can post as TUST to let members and potential members know about TUST activities or views.

Twitter / X:

The Twitter / X account has a good number of followers and content on the account that's relevant for TUST and people who follow TUST. Many fans use Twitter / X as their first place to get news regarding the club, meaning that a professional approach is needed in line with the overall strategy of TUST.

All Twitter / X communications are carried out by a select few volunteers that have access to a single Twitter / X account. In the same way as the Facebook page it is used to spread the word with what is going on with regards to TUST activities, as well as communication with other trusts in the way of showing support in troubled times or offering advice and sharing ideas.

Twitter / X also has the Fan Zone account publishing mainly the column which appears weekly in the local media.

Website:

TUST has a website which contains essential information about the organisation, its objectives, policies, minutes, activities and how to join. This is regularly updated with newsletters and other items of interest. It is maintained by an appointed TUST member.

Forums:

There are a number of TUFC related forums and these are monitored by members of the board and responses on behalf of TUST made where appropriate using the TUST login.

There will also be occasions when board members may choose to respond to issues in a personal capacity but with reference to TUST activities but in such circumstances they should not imply that they are posting on behalf of TUST.

Strategy

Although more than one person may manage the TUST social media channels internally and externally, the personality that consistently shines through those interactions should be that of TUST, not of each individual.

There is a balance to be made between remaining diplomatic and challenging the current ownership/local media. We need to judge the mood on all platforms and make a timely response where necessary; not quick enough for a knee jerk reaction and not too late so we get asked “why hasn’t TUST spoken on this yet”. This requires designated board members to monitor and respond to social media exchanges. Responses must be approved in advance by at least three board members except where a simple, factual response to a query is required.

Risk Policy/Troubleshooting

Given the nature of how fans can conduct themselves online, it’s inevitable that TUST will, on occasions, receive a backlash on social media. Whether this is a random disagreement, a personal attack on a TUST member or questioning of TUST policy/strategy.

As previously mentioned, it's important that the person dealing with this represents TUST in the best possible way. The ways to do this are:

- Responding quickly. By doing this you're breaking down the barrier between TUST and the user, ensuring TUST has a personal and professional approach.
- If it escalates, tell them to email. It's part and parcel on social media that people will have a variety of view points, some of which are just too long to respond to. In this case, it would be best to refer them to contact TUST via
- a email as social media isn't the answer for everything.
- Direct the user to the social media code of conduct.
- Don't block people. It's really important that TUST reaches out to all Torquay fans, therefore TUST shouldn't block anyone apart from obvious cases where acceptable standards have been breached.

Reporting/Contact With The Board

A member or members of the TUST board will be responsible for communications. They will monitor all channels and respond to exchanges on behalf of the board and in accordance with TUST objectives and policies. They will report on any matters of interest to the regular board meetings. In the event of anything requiring the board's attention or input between meetings, they will liaise with all board members via the e-mail or WhatsApp group.

Media guidelines

As a member and officer of TUST personal actions and comments reflect on the Trust and it is important that we all behave appropriately and in ways that are consistent with TUST values. As an officer of TUST you are already committed to actively promoting the cause of diversity and opposing discrimination and the rejection of violence. We also seek to promote a positive culture between fans to work together for the common good.

Once appointed a board member is viewed as a Trust mouthpiece. While a TUST board member is free to express their own personal opinions and views on social media or in print, they must at all times be careful how they express those opinions and views.

This guidance note sets out the principles which all our representatives are expected to follow when using forums, social media or appearing in fanzines, podcasts, broadcast or print media. The crossover between these mediums is now almost comprehensive, a tweet from a personal media account can be used by any media outlet as "a TUST representative said".

These guidelines are written to help you to project yourself in a respectful, relevant way that protects everyone's reputation and integrity and ensures supporters remain able to trust TUST and its representatives.

Guidelines:

1. Be transparent and state your involvement in TUST. Consider using your real name, identify your association with TUST and be clear about your role.
2. Never make representations in a false or misleading way. All claims must stand up to scrutiny.
3. No spam, trolling or remarks that could be interpreted as discriminatory.
4. Do not report on confidential TUST conversations and correspondence.
5. When disagreeing with anyone keep it appropriate and polite. If you find yourself in a situation online that looks as if it's becoming antagonistic do not disengage from the conversation abruptly: but feel free to ask fellow TUST officers for advice.
6. If you want to write about / contact a significant person with which TUST has an existing relationship (such as a club, League or FA official) liaise with the Trust Chair before proceeding.
7. Never give analysis / comment on anything related to on-going legal matters or litigation.
8. Any info published online is widely accessible and, once in the public domain, that cannot be 'unpublished'.
9. All media inquiries must be referred to the TUST Chair

Personal capacity or for another organisation:

Just because an account does not identify the individual as a TUST representative it does not mean that the individual's activities in that space fall outside of these guidelines.

1. There should be a clear division between 'TUST' pages and 'personal' pages.
2. If you are writing about other subjects do not use the TUST logo to promote your views.
3. Be mindful that the information you disclose does not bring TUST into disrepute.
4. Offensive, libelous, inappropriate or harmful comment about TUST members, club supporters, employees or those associated with the club must be avoided and may be deemed a disciplinary offence (see Code of Conduct).
5. One of the more difficult areas is when a TUST officer may be speaking on behalf of another organisation, which may have policy on a specific subject that is different to that of TUST. If this issue arises, you should find someone else to handle any media inquiry to avoid any potential conflict. If in doubt you must notify and discuss the matter with the TUST Chair to see if alternative options exist.

It is a privilege to represent the views of the members of TUST and that privilege is to be respected and protected.

An officer of TUST is always on duty. If in doubt please ask.