

Great Western Society Limited
Didcot Railway Centre
E-mail and Social Media Policy – Version 2.2, June 2025

Vision

Our vision is for Didcot Railway Centre to be recognised for the international importance of its collection and the value of bringing to life the golden age of steam as a dynamic Living Museum.

Mission

Our mission is to fulfil our potential as a heritage venue at the centre of its community. Accessible to all, striving to engage and inspire the widest possible audiences in the history and heritage of the Great Western Railway – the pioneering transport infrastructure that laid the foundations for contemporary transport innovation.

Values

Authentic | Welcoming | Engaging | Innovative | Great Quality | Sustainable.

Purpose and scope

This policy sets out our principles for communicating by e-mail and social media. All staff and volunteers should assume that everything we do in e-mails and on social media is public and permanent.

Our electronic communication principles are:

- Responsibility – take care you are only including content that you would feel comfortable showing up on the front page of a national newspaper.
- Privacy – take care of your personal data and do not include personal details, such as your email address or phone number in comments or posts.
- Respect – do not use defamatory or discriminatory language, images or videos of anything deemed offensive to others. Consider the timing of your communication on the recipient, for example, avoiding sending difficult messages late in the evening.
- Relevance – respond to the issue in hand and do not post or forward spam or repeat your message on multiple unconnected posts.

E-mail communication

Sending e-mail is the same as sending a letter or publishing a document in law. It is never completely confidential or secure and, despite its temporary nature, it can be stored, resent and distributed to large numbers of people.

All staff and volunteers must comply with the following:

- E-mails must not contain any references to other individuals which might be construed as libellous, harassing or insulting. Complaints about the performance or service of colleagues must be made on a face to face basis, as is normal courteous practice.
- E-mails which are sent to recipients outside DRC should be composed in a business-like manner. Any attachments such as letters should be written according to the normal house style.
- E-mails sent internally may be sent in an informal style, but staff and volunteers should observe the normal courtesy that they would extend in written documents, for example, using sentences and not upper case.
- Personal email addresses must not be disclosed at any time, unless the individual concerned has given consent.
- Colleagues are not available 24 hours a day, seven days a week so do not expect immediate replies to emails. Refrain from sending provocative e-mails to ensure a positive and respectful work environment.

- We recognise that it is not always possible to control incoming mail. Any material which would be considered as non-business like, sexually explicit or offensive should be deleted at once and reported to your line manager. Similarly, any ‘junk’ mail received should be deleted immediately.
- Do not open any e-mail or attachment that is unsolicited or looks suspicious. Be wary of email phishing, for example, demands to pay invoice or apply for refunds.
- It is a disciplinary offence to access another individual’s e-mail facility by using their password without their express permission.

Social Media and Blogs

Social media plays an increasingly important role in museums and we recognise that social media will be an important element of driving our business forward. We are also aware that social media will not be used exclusively for Didcot Railway Centre business. We must assume that anything we do on social media – whether on a business or personal account – could be viewed by a colleague, manager, partner, donor, customer or potential customer. The following guidelines are intended to help determine acceptable standards when our staff and volunteers are using social media and other related sites.

- Staff and volunteers must ensure that any entries made on social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn or blogs etc, both personal and business related, are appropriate and do not damage the reputation of the Great Western Society or Didcot Railway Centre, our customers, suppliers, associates, freelancers, staff or volunteers. Any business or personal usage that brings the company, its customers, suppliers, associates, contractors or any member of staff or volunteer into disrepute is totally unacceptable and will be classed as Gross Misconduct.
- Staff and volunteers who are permitted to use social media tools for business use should always remember they are representing the Great Western Society or Didcot Railway Centre, identifying themselves as a GWS member of staff or volunteer. Never use a customer’s name on-line unless you have their written permission to do so. Be careful about information you share about yourself and or others so that your colleagues are treated with respect for their confidentiality.
- Staff and volunteers must not become involved in arguments or disagreements with conversations or postings relating to the Great Western Society, Didcot Railway Centre, our staff, volunteers, customers, suppliers, associates or contractors. The Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures for staff and the Problem Resolution Procedure for volunteers outline the processes to follow in such cases.
- At no time must a member of staff or volunteer make comments which are unpleasant or inappropriate on social networking sites or blogs about those individuals as detailed above. We must also not engage or be seen to endorse a group or comment made by another which is of the nature as detailed in this policy. It is of the upmost importance that we respect and value others and show professionalism and integrity at all times.
- Staff and volunteers are reminded of their responsibility to act appropriately and professionally at all times when using these sites, and advise that you consider carefully whether it is appropriate to befriend a customer or supplier bearing in mind the content that they may be privy to and the implications of this. Where using these sites, they must not display or knowingly allow to be displayed on the internet any sensitive business information, e.g. financial data or visitor numbers.

Communication

Once approved by the SMT, this policy will be communicated through HOPS and the Didcot Flyer.

Approval

This policy was approved by the SMT on 26 June 2025. It will be reviewed annually.

Ann Middleton, June 2025

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