

Waikato District Council Social Media Guidelines for Candidates

Council's social media channels will remain neutral at all times. Council will promote elections and the importance of standing for election and voting, but will not associate these posts with any candidates.

Candidates must comply with the following guidelines for social media use and presence related to campaigning:

Things to be aware of

- Election advertising, using any media, including social media, must identify the person under whose authority they have been produced, as per sections 113-115 of the Local Electoral Act 2001. This means in your profile photo/bio, you must have a statement saying that all content/images on your social media channel are authorised by you or your agent. You must include a physical address in the authorisation statement.
- The Council's social media accounts (listed in Appendix I to these Guidelines), including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, are not permitted to be used as a communications channel by anyone (candidates or members of the public) for promotion, electioneering or campaigning. This also applies to all social media accounts owned by Council-controlled organisations.
- The Council's social media accounts are constantly monitored and any campaign related or electioneering content will be removed.
- If Council already follows your public social media accounts, please note you will be unfollowed 3 months prior to the election date. This protocol is in line with the Local Electoral Act 2001.
- Any social media post – positive or negative – made by any individual specifically relating to their own – or someone else's – nomination, intention to run for Council, or election campaign, will be removed.
- Candidates cannot reply to the Council's social media posts or share with a comment encouraging people to like or follow their own social media accounts or any other electioneering tool. Any posts that do this will be removed.
- Candidates must not link their own social media accounts (if they are used for campaigning purposes) to the Council's social media accounts.
- Candidates cannot rate, review, check-in or tag the Council's social media channels.

Council's social media accounts are listed in Appendix I to these Guidelines.

Some things you can do

It's a good idea to encourage people to follow your social media accounts while campaigning, include it in any promotional material. It's a great way to engage with the public – you can ask questions, run polls, encourage people to register to vote and then actually vote! Remind them of important dates, etc.

Great images are important on social media – post pics from your campaign trail, or post videos of yourself explaining who you are and what you stand for. You may have people who are happy to be filmed sharing why they will be voting for you – seeing other members of their community may encourage people to vote.

Facebook

- It's a good idea to have a public figure Facebook Page with a clear profile picture to help your election campaign. It's best to have a new photo.
- Set-aside budget for Facebook advertising to reach voters – remember to keep records of this for your Expenses Return after the elections! You need to become authorised to run ads with political content. Facebook has helpful info on this here.
- Facebook has a helpful guide about using Facebook to engage with voters and build your online community here.

Twitter

- Create a Twitter account. New Zealander's can be very active on Twitter especially when it comes to political discussions. See what hashtags are trending for the election. Follow prominent locals, and if people follow you, follow them back.
- Think of Twitter more like a newsfeed or forum to release information about everything you are doing.
- Twitter is a great platform to get involved in conversation and engage the public in the issues you are passionate about. Let people know what you stand for/what you want to change, give people the chance to share their views and explain the reasons for the changes you want to make.

Neighbourly

- Set up a personal profile on Neighbourly if you don't have one already and then you can add a special candidate pin to your profile picture so the community knows you are a candidate. On this platform you can speak directly to your ward and let the community get to know you and see what upsets them/what they care about. Neighbourly often runs special groups for local elections that you can be part of. Visit neighbourly.co.nz/help for more info.

Instagram

- Instagram is all about photos. You can feature a single photo or a collage of photos that will show up on your follower's feeds. You want to drive engagement, not just reach. So remember to focus on quality rather than quantity. Instagram is most successful when you tell personal stories and pictures that give the public greater insight into your campaign, rather than promotional images.
- Stories are a great way to group photos into albums. You might use them to share behind the scenes, promote an event, or focus on a specific issue you care about. You can also customise your Stories by adding music, text, emoji or even polls so you can make them more interactive and add a bit of your own personality.

Appendix I

Waikato District Council Social media channel list

Facebook

Waikato District Council has a number of Facebook pages:

- [Waikato District Council](#)
- [Open Waikato](#)
- [Love Waikato](#)
- [Creative Spaces Waikato](#)
- [Let's stop the Dodgy Dumpers](#)
- [Waikato District Libraries](#)

Instagram

- [Waikato District Council](#)
- [Open Waikato](#)
- [Love Waikato](#)

Twitter

- [Waikato District Council](#)
- [Open Waikato](#)
- [Love Waikato](#)

YouTube

- [Waikato District Council](#)
- [Open Waikato](#)

LinkedIn

- [Waikato District Council](#)
- [Open Waikato](#)