

Later Prehistoric Finds Group Policies

April 2021

This document sets out four policies relating to Social Media, Equality and Diversity, Harassment and Discrimination and Complaints. It provides details of the Later Prehistoric Finds Group's (hereafter LPFG's) agreed approaches to these topics and of procedures to be followed by Committee Members, Members and guests. In creating these policies, we have drawn on the policies of the Prehistoric Society, with the kind permission of the society's President, Clive Gamble.

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Social Media Policy

Introduction

Social media is the term given to interactive web-based applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Social media is essential to the success of communicating The LPFG's work and it is, therefore, important for designated committee members to participate in social media on behalf of the group.

This policy is intended for all LPFG Committee Members and applies to content posted both from the LPFG social media accounts and personal accounts. Before engaging in social media activity relating to the LPFG, committee members must read this policy. It sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of the LPFG via the use of social media by committee members in both professional and personal capacities. It sets out what we need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help committee members support and expand the group's official social media channels, whilst protecting the group and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

How does the LPFG Use Social Media?

The LPFG uses the following social media channels:

Facebook – Later Prehistoric Finds Group

Twitter – @LtrPrehistFinds

Both channels are used to share news; advertise events; disseminate our newsletters and datasheets; support our colleagues; and to encourage people to become members or to otherwise follow our work. Although it is public facing, individuals have to become members of the Facebook Group in order to obtain publishing and commenting rights.

The Facebook Officer and Twitter Officer are responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of these respective social media channels. Support is provided by the Chair and other designated Committee Members who have access to our Social Media accounts and are, therefore, available to provide support where required. Support may take the form of taking charge of an account when the relevant officer is unable to do so; making a relevant post with the agreement of the relevant officer; or responding to an urgent enquiry or issue.

Specific questions about any aspect of these channels, should be initially directed towards the Facebook or Twitter Officer. Alternatively, the Complaints Policy can be consulted.

Considerations for Committee Members using the LPFG's Social Media Accounts

The guidelines below set out the ways in which LPFG Committee Members should use social media to promote the group. Broader considerations to keep in mind include the fact that personal and professional opinions can be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to the LPFG's work. It is important not to share personal opinions when posting as the LPFG. It is also important to ensure you do not accidentally post as the LPFG when intending to post from a personal account, if using a device that is logged in to multiple accounts. Publication and commentary on social media also carry similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain, therefore legal issues, such as those around copyright, should be considered.

Anyone posting on behalf of the LPFG should be aware of the importance of taking regular breaks from the screen. They should also ensure that usage is not excessive or interfering with other employment duties. As committee members are operating in a voluntary capacity, it is important that they take responsibility for understanding their employers' restrictions on the use of Social Media and what might constitute personal use as opposed to professional use, and adjust their behaviour accordingly.

Finally, Committee Members posting on behalf of the LPFG should be aware that making a high volume of posts in a short space of time could be construed as spamming and this should be avoided unless an LPFG event, such as a conference or symposium, is taking place.

Guidelines for Appropriate Conduct using the LPFG's Social Media Channels

1. The Facebook Officer, Twitter Officer and other designated Committee Members are responsible for managing the LPFG's social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by the Chair/Deputy Chair will have access to these accounts.
2. These Committee Members check the social media channels and respond to and create content on a regular basis. Posts are also made at the request of the Chair/Deputy Chair to advertise LPFG events or disseminate information on our activities.

All committee members posting from the LPFG Social Media accounts or commenting using their personal accounts should:

3. Ensure they act as ambassador for our brand, reflect the LPFG's values in what they post, and use an appropriate tone.
4. Ensure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for the LPFG, and accurately reflects the LPFG's agreed position.
5. Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them.
6. Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images and copyright permission.
7. Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.
8. Not post content about third parties without their express permission. If committee members are sharing information about supporters, service users or third-party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled with a reference to the relevant third-party so our audiences know it has not come directly from the LPFG.
9. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, committee members must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.
10. Always check facts. Committee Members should not automatically assume that material is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification. Reasonable steps may include checking the original sources of information; verifying data/statistics; being wary of photo manipulation; and consulting the rest of the Committee when specific expert advice may be needed.
11. Be honest. Say what you know to be true or have a good source for. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.
12. Committee Members should refrain from offering personal opinions via the LPFG's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. 'Liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting' should align with the interests of the LPFG, which include matters relating to the wider archaeological community. If you are in doubt about the LPFG's position on a particular issue, please speak to the Chair/Deputy Chair, who will consult the rest of the committee in order to reach a consensus.

13. It is vital that the LPFG does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.
14. Committee Members should 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.
15. Committee Members should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of the LPFG. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, the LPFG can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.
16. The LPFG is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We have every right to express views on policy, including the policies of parties, but we can't tell people how to vote.
17. If a complaint is made on the LPFG's social media channels, Committee Members should refer them to the Complaints Policy.
18. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the LPFG's reputation. Examples might include inappropriate posting of the location of an important find site or an incident of perceived harassment or discrimination at an LPFG event. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the group. The Facebook and Twitter Officers and other designated Committee Members with social media access regularly monitor our social media spaces for mentions of the LPFG 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, those Committee Members will:
 - In the first instance, issue a warning to the offender if it is a minor transgression of the rules as stated on our social media accounts and re-state those rules.
 - In subsequent incidents, block the person from posting.
 - As appropriate, delete the offending posts.
 - In the event a post is or indicates illegal activity, consult with the Chair, hide the post from public view or save a copy before deleting it, and report the post to the relevant authorities.

If any Members of the LPFG become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on the LPFG's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the Facebook and Twitter Officers or other designated Committee Members with social media access immediately.

Equality and Diversity Policy

The LPFG is committed to promoting equality, diversity and an inclusive and supportive environment for its members and our guests. This Policy complements the additional policy focussed specifically on Harassment and Discrimination. The LPFG will seek to ensure that people are treated equitably regardless of their gender, race or ethnicity, age, disability, socio-economic background, religion or belief (including nonreligion), marriage or civil partnership, family responsibilities, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or other distinction.

The LPFG will promote diversity in its membership and Committee by recognising the contributions to the furtherance of the group that can be made by individuals with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. The LPFG will also promote and maintain an inclusive and supportive environment in all its programmed activities, which affirms the rights of individuals to be treated with respect and fairly and affords access to all groups. The LPFG will seek to ensure that Society activities, events and publications do not allow or encourage discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Should any member of the LPFG or person involved in the LPFG's activities feel subject to discrimination they should report the incident, following the Complaints Policy. All allegations of discrimination will be taken seriously and the LPFG is committed to resolving instances of discrimination as soon as it becomes aware of them. After following due process in line with our Complaints Policy, the Committee will remove from the group's membership any member whose acts are contrary to the ideals, objectives and accepted standards of the group.

Harassment and Discrimination Policy

The LPFG has a zero-tolerance policy towards any form of harassment and discrimination. This policy complements the Society's Equality and Diversity Policy. The LPFG follows the legal definitions of harassment and discrimination given in the Equalities Act 2010, which legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The Equalities Act 2010 provides detailed information on who is protected from discrimination, the types of discrimination under the law and what action you can take if you feel you've been unfairly discriminated against.

The Equalities Act 2010 can be accessed here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

A more specific definition of sexual harassment is given by the UNHCR:

“unwelcome sexual advance(s), request(s) for sexual favours, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (i) submission to or rejection of such advance(s), request (s) or conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of employment or as a basis of employment decisions; or (ii) such advance (s), request (s) or conduct (s) have the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work environment.” (UNHCR Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority, April 2005).

Policy Scope and Statement

The scope of this policy relates to all Members of the LPFG, in addition to non-members who participate in the group's events or interact with the group online. This policy is also applicable to the content of the LPFG Newsletter and datasheets; the content of the LPFG website; and the content of any other social media platforms operated by the LPFG (Facebook, Twitter etc.). The LPFG recognizes the valuable contribution its diverse membership makes to the group. It is therefore committed to providing a forum in which members and non-members can participate without fear of discrimination or harassment. Members of the LPFG will not tolerate, condone or ignore harassment of any kind. Its members are committed to:

- Educating about harassment and discrimination and why they are wrong.
- Supporting people when they talk about, report or challenge harassment or discrimination.

If any person, whether a LPFG member or not, feels that a member or guest of the LPFG has violated this Harassment and Discrimination Policy, their concerns should be communicated through following the Complaints Policy.

Recommendations for Best Practice

The LPFG recommends that all its members are:

1. Aware of what constitutes harassment and discrimination.
2. Aware of the LPFG's Policies and Recommended Best Practice.
3. Aware of laws of the country or countries in which they are working.

Complaints Policy

The LPFG views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future as well as a chance to resolve matters with the person or organisation who has made the complaint. Situations may arise which lead to an attendee at an event or a Member of the LPFG making a complaint. These situations are infrequent, but examples may include (though are not limited to):

- Membership – administration and communication.
- The Newsletter – errors or inaccuracies.
- Issues arising from attendance or payments for conferences and events.
- Harassment of any kind.

By having a transparent procedure, the LPFG aims to demonstrate:

- Commitment to the Membership and other stakeholders
- Commitment to providing an excellent service.

The aim of the Complaints Policy is to ensure the LPFG:

- Provides a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- Publicises the existence of the complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us and make a complaint.
- Ensures all LPFG Committee Members know what to do if a complaint is received. This will occur through an information pack, which Committee Members receive at their induction.
- Commits to investigate complaints fairly and respond in a timely fashion (within 28 working days).
- Endeavours to resolve all complaints wherever possible, and repair relationships.
- Gathers information and reflects on complaints in order to improve the group. Where there are implications for prevailing policies or procedures this will then be discussed by the Committee and suggestions for any appropriate amendments to LPFG policies or procedures will be made.

All complaints information will be handled sensitively following the relevant data protection requirements.

Procedure for making a complaint

If you wish to make a complaint about the LPFG, in the first instance please contact the group by email: laterprehistoricfindsgroup@gmail.com. This email address is managed by the Membership Secretary and the Chair/Deputy Chair. Emails relating to complaints will be addressed by the Chair/Deputy Chair.

You will be asked for your name, address, telephone number and email address, and a brief outline of your complaint only. If the nature of the complaint is financial, the opinion and support of the Treasurer will be requested (e.g. to ensure refunds are made). In cases where a situation arises which relates to broader issues of procedure, policy or practice, the Chair/Deputy Chair will call upon other Committee Members as appropriate. A complaints log will be kept by the Chair/Deputy Chair and reports on complaints will be disseminated to the Committee on a monthly basis, subject to UK Data Protection Law. An annual summary of complaints activity will be submitted at the AGM.

The Chair/Deputy Chair will also be notified where the clarification or resolution of a complaint is not felt to be acceptable to the complainant. The Chair/Deputy Chair will consider the issue, and the matter will be dealt with as soon as reasonably possible, usually within 28 working days. The complainant will receive correspondence summarising the results and any actions to be undertaken.

Rapid Response “Best Practice”

The LPFG recognises that under certain circumstances action will be required more rapidly than the standard Complaints Policy allows. For example, should an allegation of harassment or discrimination arise at a conference or other event, the LPFG recognises its obligation to:

- Support all parties involved.
- Avoid unnecessary escalation of the situation.
- Minimise stress and to ensure as little disruption to other participants at the event.
- Do its best facilitate fair and effective resolution of the situation.

With this in mind, recommendations are to:

1. Ensure signage is visible at in-person events (or include a slide in online events) indicating what to do if a participant feels harassment or discrimination has occurred.
2. Identify and provide Safe Spaces for all parties before in-person events are run.
3. Include a clear statement on the LPFG’s zero tolerance policy relating to harassment and discrimination in conference or event communications.
4. Where a complaint is made, ensure that *all parties* are supported by different members of the Committee.
5. Ensure that members of the Committee who have volunteered to fulfil such roles understand how to proceed and the importance of confidentiality.
6. Ensure all parties involved categorically refrain from posting any comments related to the incident on Social Media.

Anonymity

A complainant can, where appropriate, ask for their anonymity to be observed. However, the LPFG recognises that in certain circumstances it may need to seek additional or external advice to resolve an issue. Under such circumstances the LPFG reserves the right to disclose the complainant’s identity. This decision will rest with the Chair/Deputy Chair or, if a financial matter, the Treasurer and the complainant will be informed and will retain the right to reply.

Note Concerning Complaints about LPFG Publications

The LPFG publishes a bi-annual newsletter and a series of datasheets. Copyright issues and plagiarism are matters for which authors take responsibility when they sign a contributor form. For any complaints about copyright or plagiarism in these publication, please direct enquiries or complaints to individual authors. For any other complaints about the nature or content of the newsletter and datasheets, about the Editors’ comments, or about the content of the LPFG website or LPFG social media accounts, please contact the LPFG via laterprehistoricfindsgroup@gmail.com. The complaint will be addressed by the Chair/Deputy Chair, and the relevant Editor (Newsletter Editor, Datasheets Editor, Website Editor or Social Media Editors) as appropriate, for consideration. The matter will be dealt with as soon as reasonably possible, usually within 28 working days. The complainant will receive correspondence summarising the results and any actions to be undertaken.