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# **COLCHESTER OPERATIC SOCIETY** **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

This policy applies to Colchester Operatic Society (COS) and its committees, including Colchester Operatic Society Second Edition (CO2), who are collectively referred to as “The Society” and “Colchester Operatic Society”.

Colchester Operatic Society and many of its trustees, members, volunteers & appointed personnel participate in social networking using websites such as (but not exclusively) Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, Threads and X (formerly known as Twitter) otherwise known as social media. The Society uses social media to help promote its work and would encourage others to help share relevant and appropriate content to support this. Guidance to ensure everyone feels comfortable in the knowledge of what they can and can't share online, and how best to interact with the Society's official channels, can be found within this policy and in Appendix A.

The Society has authorised members of our committees to post official and appropriate content to the Society's social media accounts. Details on our social media handles can be found in Appendix A. This access is



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monitored and controlled by trustees and can be revoked if these individuals do not adhere to this policy and the attached guidance in Appendix A and/or if they step down from their roles on any committee.

The Society uses production specific closed and/or secret groups (usually through Facebook) as a forum for communication between the committees (including trustees), & their members, cast members and members of the production team and stage crew. These are monitored by appointed members of the Executive Committee (trustees) as administrators. Only relevant people are invited to join these groups and all posts made to the group must be approved by an admin. We also have a public COS Facebook group used to share information to a wider audience of members, including previous and potential members, and whilst still monitored by us, this group is not a confidential forum.

Whilst those invited to join these groups are free to use them as a communication and social networking tool, we ask that **everyone ensures that they do not breach the law, defame the Society or any other individuals involved with the Society and its productions.** This also applies to anyone posting on social media on behalf of or about the Society, and whether on official or personal accounts. We respect an individual's right to personal opinions and the freedom



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to voice these within our social media groups, on our public Facebook page, and when using personal social networking accounts/pages, but we ask all trustees, members, volunteers and appointed personnel to:

- Ensure that they do not conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the Society and/or its productions
- Take care not to allow their interaction online, both on personal social networking accounts/pages and within any members and/or production Facebook or other social media groups and forums, to damage or perceive to damage working relationships between individuals involved in any of our productions and activities.
- Never include material that is abusive, defamatory, sexist, racist, or that could be interpreted as inciting hatred towards others, discrimination, prejudice, harassment or bullying.
- To raise any issues or concerns related to the Society and its productions or activities directly with the relevant personnel and/or committee rather than inciting open discussion on social media platforms, groups and/or forums



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- Adhere to Society Policies, Procedures and guidance including our 'Guidance on sharing social media content' where appropriate – see Appendix A

If posts or comments made to ANY of our Facebook groups and social media platforms are deemed to be in breach of the above conditions they may be deleted or will NOT be approved. Further action may be taken if deemed necessary or appropriate, such as removing individuals from our Facebook and social media group/s, removing an individual's role, position or status from the production and/or Society and if necessary, reporting an individual to the police for criminal prosecution.

Members of the Executive Committee, as trustees who manage the Society, make every effort that is reasonably possible to ensure that all of its members, volunteers and appointed personnel are treated with dignity and respect. Bullying, harassment and discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes cyber-bullying, which could include bullying by text messages, phone calls, Instant messenger services, circulating photos or video clips or by posting comments online, including on Facebook groups and/or other social networking sites. Any evidence or reports of bullying, discrimination and/or harassment will be taken



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seriously by the Executive Committee, discussed and appropriate action taken. This may include removing individuals from our Facebook and social media group/s, removing an individual's role, position or status from the production and/or Society and if necessary, reporting an individual to the police for criminal prosecution.

Individuals with complaints regarding the Society, its productions, trustees, members, volunteers or appointed personnel should follow our complaints procedure and refrain from publicly complaining using our Facebook group/s, page and/or other social networking sites and forums, as this can be detrimental to Individuals, personal relationships and/or the reputation of the Society.

**We expect all trustees, members, volunteers and appointed personnel to read and abide by the terms of this policy and any attached guidance.**

In addition, we expect those appointed as administrators of Society social media pages, groups, accounts and websites to monitor the pages/groups/accounts/websites they have been assigned to, to ensure individuals adhere to our social



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media policy and guidance, reporting any violations of this policy, guidance and/or any evidence or incidents of bullying, discrimination and/or harassment to the Executive Committee and other authorities as and when necessary and taking appropriate action, such as removing any inappropriate material posted, to safeguard the Society; its trustees, members, volunteers and appointed personnel; and the wider community.

Please see Appendix 1 for **Guidance on sharing content on social media.**

Policy Reviewed & Updated December 2024



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## **Appendix A**

# **COS Guidance on sharing content on social media**

We encourage trustees, members, volunteers and appointed personnel to share their involvement with the Society and the Society's productions, activities, events and achievements online if they would like to. This guidance has been laid out to ensure everyone feels comfortable in the knowledge of what they can and can't share online, and how best to interact with the Society's official channels.

If you would like to tag Colchester Operatic Society in your social media posts, our handles are:

Facebook: @colchesteroperaticsociety

X (formerly Twitter): @ColchesterOpSoc

Instagram: @colchesteroperatic

TikTok: @colchesteroperatic and for CO2 -

@colchesteroperaticyouth

YouTube: @colchesteroperaticsociety

LinkedIn: @colchesteroperaticsociety



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Before sharing any Colchester Operatic Society related content, the trustee, member, volunteer or appointed personnel should ensure that:

- They are posting it on the appropriate page/group/platform for the intended audience
- It complies with the Society's constitution and all of its policies, procedures and guidelines including but not limited to this Social Media Policy, any Codes of Conduct, Inclusion, Equality & Diversity Policy, Safeguarding Policy, and all Data Protection and Privacy policies.
- It is aligned with the Society's charitable purpose and ethical values (as detailed in our constitution, policies, procedures and guidelines)
- It complies with any laws including Data Protection and copyright laws
- It complies with any contractual obligations, including but not limited to the conditions associated with any rights secured for any production and any funding or sponsorship agreements
- It complies with any guidance from the Charity Commission
- It is age appropriate for the audience it is intended for





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- You have the appropriate permissions from anyone included visually or audibly in the content
- It does NOT include material that is abusive, defamatory, sexist, racist, or that could be interpreted as inciting hatred towards others, discrimination, prejudice, harassment or bullying.
- It does NOT damage or perceive to damage the reputation of the Society or bring it into disrepute.
- It does NOT defame or disparage the Society or any of its trustees, members, volunteers or appointed personnel
- It is not false or misleading
- It does not reveal any confidential or business sensitive information
- It is not promoting or inciting opposition to any political campaigns for any political party or candidate
- It is not overtly sexual, violent and/or does not contain nudity and/or strong adult language

## Sharing of Colchester Operatic Society owned content

Colchester Operatic Society-owned content refers to:

- Any content created by a trustee, member, volunteer or appointed personnel on behalf of the Society at



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our rehearsals, during production runs or for our productions and activities, including but not limited to trustee statements, cast announcements, cast interviews, rehearsal footage and photos, audio recordings of vocals, announcements, interviews and dialogue etc.

- Any content commissioned by Colchester Operatic Society e.g. production photography/images/recordings/videography and show artwork
- Any content that includes the Colchester Operatic Society and/or CO2 logo or branding e.g. a policy, poster, advert etc.

The best way to share this content is to share the official posts from Colchester Operatic Society accounts, as you'll know it's all approved and ready to be seen, or use approved content shared to you by trustees and/or committee members for this purpose.

However, should you choose to share any of the above content in a post of your own, please only do so if you ensure the following:

- The content has already been posted on Colchester Operatic Society pages



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- The content has been shared with you with explicit permission to post
- The image, recording or video is unedited and remains as originally designed or commissioned by Colchester Operatic Society

The Society has authorised members of our committees to post official and appropriate content to the Society's social media accounts. These individuals must adhere to the additional guidance listed in the end section of this guidance.

### Sharing of personal Colchester Operatic Society related content

This refers to content you have captured yourself whilst involved in Society activities, possible examples could include backstage content, selfies, dressing room photos, photos/videos of you rehearsing etc. This content is absolutely fine to post, providing you ensure that:

- Everyone who appears in the content (visually and audibly) has given permission to be included in it and for it to be shared online.



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- The content doesn't reveal or spoil an aspect of a Society Production that hasn't yet been posted online or isn't allowed online
- If the content includes something that has been created by someone else, please check with them first
- It does not include any unapproved performance footage including videos taken of the stage/performance from the side of the stage or visual and/or audio footage of any show relay
- If the content includes any audio, including show dialogue, vocals and/or music/orchestration, in the background of any footage, you must check it is appropriate to post and you have the appropriate permissions to post it online
- It does NOT include material that is abusive, defamatory, sexist, racist, or that could be interpreted as inciting hatred towards others, discrimination, prejudice, harassment or bullying.
- It does NOT damage or perceive to damage the reputation of the Society or bring it into disrepute.
- It does NOT defame or disparage the Society or any of its trustees, members, volunteers or appointed personnel



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- It will not damage or perceive to damage working relationships between you and other individuals involved in any of our productions and activities.

### Additional guidance for authorised personnel posting content to the Society's official social media accounts and websites

All those authorised with access to post on the Society's official social media accounts and website must adhere to the above guidance alongside the following additional guidance:

- The Society's official social media accounts and websites should only be used for the Society's purposes and benefit
- Posts, blogs and any narrative should be written using appropriate language for a general audience and include correct spellings, punctuation and grammar. Any mistakes with this that may occur should be corrected as soon as possible.
- Anything posted on behalf of the Society should be engaging for audiences but uphold our professional reputation and posted with an awareness of how it represents the Society
- Content should be suitable for the intended audience and positively promote the Society and its production,



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events and activities with the view to increase engagement for the Society on social media

- Content must not include any unapproved performance footage including videos taken of the stage/performance from the side of the stage or visual and/or audio footage of any show relay that directly contravenes our performance rights
- If the content includes any audio, including show dialogue, vocals and/or music/orchestration, in the background of any footage, you must check you have the appropriate permissions to post it online
- If content contains any recorded music that falls under copyright laws, you must ensure we have obtained the rights to use this – if you are unsure, please speak to our Chair or Marketing Lead for further guidance
- You must ensure any images or recordings used are copyright free, do not breach copyright or we have obtained the licences to use them
- You must ensure you have the appropriate permissions from anyone included in any images/photos/recordings before taking these images/photos/recordings and/or using them in content and ensure you are sharing them on the



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correct platform and to the correct audience in line with these permissions

- When promoting any shows and productions that we have obtained licences to produce and perform, you must ensure you are including any credits we are legally obliged to include in posters, posts and adverts etc, as per any licencing contract and detailed on riders from the licencing company (this is often referred to as legal wording informally)
- Footage and/or images are not of an overtly sexual or violent nature, unless the specific production you are promoting includes adult content of a violent and/or sexual nature, in which case you must ensure anything that could be deemed as overtly sexual or violent is shared sensitively with age-appropriate audiences only (and if appropriate or relevant, include relevant links to reaching out for support for anyone who may be adversely affected by the themes/content you are promoting)
- Anyone captured in any images and/or footage is wearing appropriate clothing, unless a production specifically calls for nudity in which case, you must ensure full consent is given by the subject of the images/videos; and images/videos are taken



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sensitively and appropriately conceal private parts of those participating

- If the content relates to or contains images and/or footage of children and/or young people you must be extra mindful of safeguarding them online when creating these posts, ensuring content is suitable, appropriate and always in their best interests
- Content does not promote tobacco products, smoking, under-age drinking or taking drugs
- We can share relevant content from national, local and/or affiliated organisations, societies, groups, charities, funders, approved bodies and businesses to build positive relationships and mutual support for the Society, as long as they are aligned with our charitable purposes and ethical values and the content is appropriate. We should make every effort to share external content fairly and without prejudice.