



Scottish Auto Cycle Union  
Communications Policy



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## **PREAMBLE**

The Scottish Auto-Cycle Union (SACU) is the controlling body for Motorcycle Sport in Scotland, we are a National Club within the Auto – Cycle Union (ACU) and recognised as the controlling body for motorcycle sport in Scotland. All events are permitted and run under the guidance of the National Sporting Code and Standing Regulations contained within the ACU Handbook.

**The SACU's general sphere of responsibility and influence is strictly limited to events and their environs covered by a SACU Permit or agreed SACU functions and practices**

All communication should reflect the underlying aims ethics and policies of the SACU.

All communications will respect the law and the demands Data Protection Act.

All communications will respect the relevant confidentiality of individuals and of the documents' material.

### **1. Introduction**

**1.1** Communication plays an essential role in the conduct of our business. How we communicate as an organisation reflects on the professionalism of the organisation and our ability to engage with all stakeholders.

**1.2** Effective communication can help achieve our organisational aims by ensuring people understand the message we are trying to get across and if done correctly can change the perceptions of what we do.

**1.3** Effective knowledge of how we communicate across the spread of Directors, Committee Members and Staff ensures a consistent message is delivered to stakeholders. This is important when we deal with social media and the Internet.

### **2. Internal Communications**

**2.1** Internal communication should be defined as communications between the office and Directors, Committees and staff.

The Office is the focal point for communications across the SACU. Whether internal or external the office must deal with correspondence quickly and effectively.

**2.2** The quickest and most efficient method of communication is via email. As far as possible the SACU should endeavour to ensure that directors have access to email. The SACU should endeavour to provide directors with a webmail address through future iterations of the SACU website. Address lists should be kept up to date and monitored to ensure they stay relevant.

Communication has to work both ways, it's useful if communication is acknowledged and responses are passed back as quickly as possible.

**2.3** Where directors or staff attend workshops or seminars, it would be useful to report back on them even a summary relating in the office may be enough to prove beneficial to others in the future. Different individuals will take different elements from a summary, therefore varying viewpoints are valuable to the organisation.

### **3. External Communications**

3.1 External communication should be defined as any correspondence from or to any external stakeholders. This communication and its movement on to the relevant Directors or committee members is important and should be handled properly and as efficiently as possible.

All external communications will come into the office for further distribution to the relevant directors and committee members. Discretion must be used at all times to ensure the relevant documents go to the right people.

#### **3.2 Style of communication**

Attention should be paid to the style communication is delivered to us. If a correspondence comes in letter format, it should be replied to in letter format similarly if it comes in email/memo style that kind of response should be delivered in return.

#### **3.3 Communication with the ACU:**

Correspondence from the ACU should be reviewed by the Office Manager and if necessary forwarded to the relevant directors for response.

Minutes from meetings of ACU committees should be retained on file and passed to Directors and Committees where relevant.

#### **3.4 Communication with sportscotland:**

Correspondence from **sportscotland** should be reviewed by the Office Manager and if necessary forwarded to the relevant directors for response.

#### **3.5 Communications with Clubs:**

General communications to all clubs and riders should be posted on the website and on Facebook. Communications to clubs and Secretaries should be by email where possible – then by letter if necessary. It is best practice to ensure we have at least two communication addresses for each club in order to maximise the clubs reached as quickly as possible.

Bulletins should be emailed to secretaries and Directors where possible with a read receipt to show the club has received it. For clubs not on email then post out copies. The Bulletin can be also posted on the website in pdf format. For expediency sakes, links to web posts can be linked through Facebook.

#### **3.6 Website**

The website is controlled by the office, any necessary information should be posted as quickly as is feasible.

The website is our main public portal and public repository for all necessary information needed by riders and officials alike. Its content must always be correct and hold the latest versions of any documentation, policy documents and forms. PDF versions of current forms (other than license forms) should be available to download.

#### **3.7 Newsletters**

Periodically the directors will issue a general newsletter, this should be distributed via email in pdf format, posted on the website and linked via other social media forms. Additionally, copies should be posted to clubs.

#### **4. Accessible Communication Formats**

The SACU are committed towards providing accessible information and communication. To ensure inclusive practice across all areas of business, we are committed to:

- Making our information available in different formats, such as easy-to-read format and in large print
- Making sure our website has an up to date, dedicated area that explains all accessibility options available to people detailing how they can ask for accessible and alternative versions of summaries of our information
- Tailoring the delivery of meetings, training days, the AGM, seminars etc. to best suit the needs of our people, e.g. using a venue with a hearing loop, wheelchair access etc.

#### **5. Dealing with Press Enquiries**

##### **5.1 Introduction**

Incidents and accidents happen, they are a fact of life however they need not present too much of an issue if we are able to communicate the problem and our actions accurately. Full statements on behalf of the SACU should always be made by a director who has responsibility to speak on behalf of the organisation.

##### **5.2 Responding to Enquiries**

At all times remember journalists are looking for a story, if it's not there it's not unknown for them to try and pull a story out, be cautious at all times.

There are a few simple rules to follow when responding to any enquiries, they are:

- **NEVER lie**
- **Never give a "No Comment" as a response**
- **Build yourself and the organisation time to respond properly**
- **Ensure the organisations message is put across positively**

##### **5.3 General Press Enquiries**

General enquiries should be answered where possible. Be factual, be honest and always take a note of who you have spoken to and what was discussed.

However, with general enquiries there can be an element of "phishing", looking for a story when there's maybe something else going on in the general media. Care needs to be taken with exactly what is said and what the line of questioning is and where it may lead. Should it become necessary, take some contact details and refer to a director.

##### **5.4 Reacting to a Direct Press Enquiry**

When there are issues that the SACU or sport in general comes under direct scrutiny, response needs to be coordinated. Any contact should be noted and referred to which ever director is responsible for response.

If we have proactively created a press release or press comment, then that can be released on request. An example of this was created recently following guidance from Safeguarding in Sport after the historic allegations of abuse in football.

"The SACU - MotorCycle Sport Scotland, has every sympathy with any sport facing allegations of this nature, we can understand the difficulties they face. As yet we have had no allegations passed to us from any area of motorcycle sport in Scotland and should we do so, they will be passed directly to Police Scotland in accordance with guidance received from Children 1st, The Safeguarding Charity delegated with responsibility for Child Wellbeing and Protection by sportScotland.

Obviously, we will cooperate suitably with any organisations who require our input"

### 5.5 Motor Cycle Media Enquiries

Any enquiries from the motorcycle press should be dealt with in exactly the same way as the general media, take notes and pass to the relevant director for comment.

### 5.6 Invoking a Major Incident Management Plan

Invoking a major incident plan should not be taken lightly, it will mean using up valuable director's time and analysing whether it is necessary must be the first stage in understanding the seriousness of the incident.

There are two occasions when it may be necessary to invoke a Major Incident Management Plan:

**5.6.1 Incidents or Accidents:** Responding to an accident or incident affecting the SACU, it's members or our sports. Examples of this could be a death at an event, an accident involving an SACU license holder at an event out with Scotland etc etc.

**5.6.2 Reputation Management:** Responding to something that may affect the reputation of the SACU or Motorcycle Sport in Scotland. Examples of this could be misconduct of an official or club or anything that may bring the SACU into disrepute.

**5.6.3** On the onset of an issue that would fall under these categories, Directors need to discuss how to react; whether to issue a proactive media statement or to react to any enquiries. Good judgement on how the organisation responds can quickly gain control over the situation and control of information. It is critical that a cohesive message goes out. Directors should use the following plan to analyse, understand and create a response to the incident.

- **What is the incident/accident** – Analyse what's happened and decide which category the issue falls into.
- **Do we need external guidance and advice** – Understanding the incident will dictate whether we need to get advice from external agencies, **sportscotland**, legal assistance, the ACU or anyone else.

- **Which director should deal with the incident** – Directors have various skills they bring to the board. The ability to communicate a message accurately must be paramount.
- **What communication should be released** – Directors will need to decide the format and level of the communication that needs released. Is it motorcycling specific only or an issue that needs addressed in the wider media, such as a major crash at an event or the death of a Scottish rider at an event anywhere on the world
- **Do we need to communicate with members** – Directors will need to decide whether the incident needs communicating to the wider membership. They will also need to assess what to say.
- **How do you close out the incident** – Directors should decide how the incident is closed
- **Follow up actions** – Directors **MUST** follow up any invocation of the Major Incident Plan with a review of how it was handled, an assessment of how successfully the plan was dealt with and what additional training is necessary for directors to improve their ability to deal with incidents in the future.

All communication must be honest, factual and straight to the point, do not give them more than is necessary. In the short period after an incident takes place names of those involved should NOT be released.

At all times use positive language, never negative and avoid falling into negative lines of questioning, it is vital that you and an individual continue to get our message across. Never make unsustainable promises eg do not say “this will never happen again” but use something like “we will continue to seek ways to prevent recurrence” – it remains a positive message without promising something that cannot be guaranteed.

Should it be necessary for radio/tv interviews then the director best placed geographically should take responsibility to present the message on our behalf. Again, remember the simple rules already highlighted:

**NEVER lie**

**Never give a “No Comment” as a response**

**Build yourself and the organisation time to respond properly**

**Ensure the organisations message is put across positively**

At all times communication with the media must protect the reputation of SACU.

## **6. Social Media**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The use of Social Media in all its forms has become a vital part of every organisations’ communications plan, the SACU is no different. It is critical that communication is effective and consistent with the SACU and SMS message.

### **5.2 Forms of Media and Accounts**

The SACU currently has two Facebook Accounts, SACU – Motorcycle Sport Scotland and a second page SACU Live.



The SACU – Motorcycle Sport Scotland is essentially controlled by the office and will largely be used to update riders and clubs with news and rules. It can be used to push out results and links to entry forms and the like. It is the official page of the SACU.

The SACU Live page is designed to show our events as they happen when possible. It too should be used for results, photos and videos; anything that spreads the message of what the SACU and it's members and clubs are up to each weekend. There are multiple authorised users on the SACU Live page.

Additionally we have a twitter account @SACU\_Scotland.

### 5.3 Basic Guidance

Fundamentally, Social Media allows the SACU Directors and Staff to communicate the SACU message however it is fraught with pitfalls. We strongly advise that Directors and Staff follow these few do's and dont's

#### **Do's:**

- **Know your audience** - Our social media pages are designed to a fixed audience and promotes the specifics of motorcycle sport in Scotland. Keep anything the SACU publishes simple and factual without trying to promote any personal message.
- **Be active but don't over-do it** - Be active on social media, but don't post so often as it's possible to overwhelm or annoy people. This can lead to two problems: 1) Too much information can cause your followers to stop following your posts or 2) Your posts can get lost within newsfeeds then the importance and relevance of your posts becomes lost.
- **Understand the best use of time** - Time matters pay attention to analytics and understand when followers are most active. This allows to maximise the impact of your message.
- **Be Consistent** - Social media is great for sharing, but make sure your message is clear and consistent across all channels: website, public, social media, etc. Additionally, ALL posts should reflect the aims and aspirations of the SACU.
- **Share** - We're taught to share as young people, social media is there to share information! We should all endeavour to do so.
- **Make a Checklist** - It sounds simple but one of the many pitfalls of Social Media is poor spelling and grammatical errors, posts that just don't make sense, this is very unprofessional. Make a checklist to ensure that your message will be understood, check for any grammar issues, make sure the information you're sharing can be shared and check the time you send it to ensure your readers will see it. Make sure all of your links are valid. These are just a few examples of things to pay attention to; it could save you time and trouble later.
- **Be Professional** - Anything published on our Social Media pages speaks for the SACU and if done badly reflects poorly on the organisation. See comments on Checklists.

## Don'ts

- **Don't neglect your profile(s)** - Use your social media! Having a Facebook page or Twitter account isn't enough. You have to maintain all of your accounts to make them work for you.
- **Don't share too much** - Be careful of the things you share and don't share too much information or overwhelm your followers. This can lead to two problems: 1) Too much information can cause your followers to stop following your posts or 2) Your posts can get lost within newsfeeds then the importance and relevance of your posts becomes lost
- **Don't connect with everyone** - Just because someone follows you, doesn't mean you have to follow them back. Choose who you follow carefully to allow you to expand your network in areas that will strategically beneficial to the organisation but.....
- **Don't forget to network** – .... Networking is important to widen the reach of the organisation. As before make sure you network in a way that benefits the organisation.
- **Don't forget about confidentiality** – Discretion should always be used when posting, commercially confidential matters should never be released with out the authority of the Board. Private and personal information should never be posted on Social Media either.
- **Don't Forget** - Once you share something on the internet, it stays there. You can delete the post, but it may have been shared or screenshotted already. Take care of privacy settings including protecting your passwords. Choose passwords carefully and never divulge them to anyone else.
- **Don't ignore comments** - It is vital to engage within your network. No engagement suggests you are a “closed environment” and are uninterested in the wider scope of your audience.
- **Don't ignore** - relevant comments, use them as an opportunity to interact with your wider network.
- **Don't delete negative comments** – but don't engage in threads an posts that are likely to become abusive or inflammatory or destructive.

### 5.4 Best Practice Guidelines

A set of best practice guidelines have been created by our SMS development team, this can be found at Annex A.

## 7. Concerns and Complaints

### 6.1 Introduction

The SACU is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and we encourage Members, Licence holders and others working with us to raise any concerns about any aspect of our work or areas of responsibility to come forward with their concerns.

### 6.2 Aim & Scope

This Policy aims to reassure individuals that their concerns will be addressed and acted upon. The following outlines the options for raising a concern with the SACU and how the concern will be processed.

### 6.3 Policy

Concerns can be about anything but may fall under the following general descriptions:

- Conduct which is, has been or is likely to be an offence or breach of law
- Conduct that has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur the result of which means that the SACU fails to comply with a legal obligation or breaches any part of the SACU group of Policies.
- Disclosures related to past, current or likely miscarriages of justice
- Past, current or likely health and safety risks, including risks to the public
- Past, current or likely damage to the environment

Concerns about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of SACU Directors, staff, Members or Licence holders or others acting on behalf of the SACU.

This may be about something that you feel uncomfortable about in terms of known standards, your experience or the standards described throughout the SACU policy:

- Falls below established standards of practice
- Considered to be improper conduct.

### 6.4 Confidentiality

All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if this is your wish, however, in certain cases, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality if you are required to come forward as a witness.

### 6.5 Anonymous Allegations

Whenever possible you should put your name to your allegation as concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful than those attributed to a named individual, however, anonymous allegations will be considered for investigation but only at the SACU's discretion.

In exercising their discretion, some factors that will be taken into account are:

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the concern
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from alternative sources.

### 6.6 Untrue Allegations

If you make an allegation in good faith that is not subsequently confirmed by an investigation, no action will be taken.

**Disciplinary action may be taken against individuals who knowingly make false, malicious or vexatious allegations.**

### 6.7 How to Raise a Concern

Concerns in all but extreme cases must be formal and in writing addressed to the SACU office (email or letter or fax), or a currently serving Director of the SACU. Contact details are available on the website or from the SACU Office. If you are at all limited or restricted in communicating

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a concern in this manner then get a friend to do it for you or ask a Director or the SACU office to put your concerns in writing for you.

A concern raised in writing should:

- Set out the background and history of the concern, giving as much information as possible
- Give the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation
- If applicable, outline what you consider to be an appropriate outcome

The earlier a concern is raised the easier it is to take action. Although you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation beyond doubt, you need to demonstrate that there are sufficient grounds for your concern.

- Concerns specific to one of our sporting disciplines will typically be referred to the specific Discipline Committee
- Concerns about a specific Discipline Committee will be referred to the SACU Board
- All other concerns will be referred to the SACU Board

Concerns should be sent to the office so that they can be registered and forwarded for action as appropriate and then progress monitored. The exception being that any concerns about the office should be submitted via a Director.

CURRENT CONTACTS Office; 01506 858354 / [office@sacu.co.uk](mailto:office@sacu.co.uk)

Directors: Contact details available from the office

## 6.8 How the SACU will respond

You will be written to / emailed within ten working days:

- Acknowledging that the concern has been received
- Indicating how the SACU propose to deal with the matter
- Giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
- Informing you if any initial enquiries have been made
- Whether further investigations will take place and, if not, why not

What action is taken will depend on the nature of the concern. It may:

- Be investigated internally by Management, Internal Audit or through the disciplinary or other internal process
- Be referred to the Police
- Be referred to the External Auditor or Arbitrator
- Form the subject of an independent inquiry.

In order to protect individuals and the SACU, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific policy will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.

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## **6.9 Contact**

The amount of contact between the officers considering the issues and you will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought.

## **6.10 Attending Meetings**

You have the right to be accompanied at any meeting that is arranged to address the concern.

## **6.11 Support**

The SACU will take steps to minimise any difficulties you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the SACU will advise or arrange for you to have advice about the procedure.

The SACU will not tolerate harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take action to protect individuals who raise a concern in good faith.

The SACU accepts that you need to be assured that concerns will be properly addressed and, subject to legal constraints, will provide information about the outcomes of any investigations.

## **6.12 How the matter can be taken further**

This procedure is intended to provide individuals with an avenue to raise concerns within the SACU. If you are not satisfied, and feel it is right to take the matter further, the following are possible contact points:

- **sportscotland**
- Audit Commission 020 7630 1019
- Relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations
- A solicitor
- The Police

If a matter is taken outside the SACU, you must take all reasonable steps to ensure that confidential or privileged information is not disclosed. If in doubt, check with the named SACU contacts.

## **6.13 Concerns Aired on Social Media or in the Public Domain**

Concerns raised in a manner other than defined above will be regarded as informal and will not be considered or responded to by the SACU even if they are aware of them. The SACU will however respond to activity consider libellous or slanderous and support those affected.

Social media is very valuable in that it allows a lot of people to stay in contact, to air their views and state an opinion. If a valid concern is raised in such circumstances, then the SACU would encourage those involved to make a formal submission to the SACU.

NB; The SACU is a democratic organisation representing its Members. No individual SACU officer or staff member can respond to or contribute to a social media topic other than as an individual. Any SACU response or comment must be considered and formal and come from

SACU Management. This is why the SACU policy requires all and any concerns be raised in a formal and considered manner and as detailed above.

## **Annex A**

### SACU Social Media Best Practice Guide

## **SOCIAL MEDIA - BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

### **Introduction**

Social networking sites are a great way of communicating and socialising with Club Members and the general public. However, members must not forget that the information they post on these platforms may be seen by a wider audience out with their Club.

New forms of Social Media provide increased opportunities for communication and information sharing in a way that is interactive, relaxed and conversational. As it exists in the public domain, if utilised effectively, it can be used as a powerful engagement and marketing tool.

As Social Networking continues to grow, it makes absolute sense that clubs embrace and utilise its benefits whilst maintaining awareness of potential risks associated with the use of social media.

### **Purpose**

In a society where Social Media is at the forefront of modern communication, these Guidelines are intended to provide clubs and their members with helpful advice on how to apply best practice and make appropriate decisions across Social Media platforms including (but not limited to) Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Internet Forums, Chat Rooms and commenting on web articles. The Guidelines also aim to assist Clubs in building and engaging with communities of like-minded people.

### **General Guidelines**

#### **1. Be aware of the difference between Public and Private Platforms**

If you wish to carry out private discussions intended only for members, check the privacy settings on your Social Media accounts and adjust appropriately. However, it is important to note that despite the presence of privacy options, it can be difficult to ensure that sites are completely private.

Be aware that members can 'screen shot' online content if accessed from their mobile phones. This information can then be uploaded and shared. When posting a message on Social Media, always assume that anyone can access it.

#### **2. Take responsibility for your content and be mindful as to how it may be perceived**

Be aware that anything posted to a public domain may attract the attention of the wider Media. Negative attention from the Media can have a huge impact on both the Club and the Sport in general.

Therefore, when discussing Club business online, act in a professional, constructive manner and use sound judgement before posting content. If a member's personal profile identifies them as part of the Club, they should be mindful towards the comments they post and how these contribute towards the Club's brand identity. Posts referencing the Club directly or those which can be traced back to the Club should be consistent with how the Club wishes to be perceived in the public domain.

#### **3. Be courteous and act with integrity**

Generally speaking, if you would not say it to someone's face, you should not write it! Whenever you are participating in conversation on an official capacity or when associated directly with the club in the public eye, consider whether or not your opinions are appropriate in the context of conversation. Remember that anyone associated with the club and speaking on its behalf represents the brand image of the Club as a whole. Never use Social Media to insult, discriminate, troll or harass any individual, group or Club in any form. It would also be beneficial to note that even when

comments have been deleted, they could already have been copied or shared on other sites. Always assume that what you post is available online indefinitely.

#### **4. Be aware of copyrighted material and comply with legislation**

Only use third party logos, materials or trademarks if you have been granted the permission to do so. Be mindful when copying and pasting a third party's photo or text without their permission that you may be infringing on their property rights.

Please be aware that UK laws apply online; safeguarding, libel, slander and data protection laws apply alongside the Privacy Act (1988) and the Spam Act (2003). Therefore be careful with the messages you deliver.

#### **5. Be safe!**

You should never share your own, or anyone else's personal details (home address, phone number, bank details etc.) online. If it is necessary to share private information, it should be done via direct private message whilst maintaining extreme caution.

If new online members are showing interest in signing up to the Club, be sensible with organising meetings. You should not arrange one-to-one meetings with people you have only spoken to online.

#### **Club Responsibility**

It is the Club's responsibility to ensure that their members are made aware of the Best Practice Guidelines if they wish to protect the integrity of their Club's brand identity and image. Members should then be expected to take responsibility for their own actions whilst participating in Social Media and apply appropriate discretion in line with these guidelines.

#### **Club Monitoring**

When in the reasonable opinion of the Club Committee that a member has posted content which has breached these Guidelines or is deemed to be unacceptable beyond reasonable doubt, the Club may permanently remove all content.

Clubs also withhold the right to remove and block offending participants from their Social Media platforms.

#### **Social Media Policy**

It is recommended that clubs have their own social media policy in place to ensure the club is represented appropriately on social media. If you do not have a policy in place and would like some assistance developing a social media policy for your club, please do not hesitate to contact us.

#### **Links**

Sportscotland – Social Media Guidelines: <http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/media/719843/Social-Media-Guidelines-for-Athletes.pdf>