FERNTREE GULLY FOOTBALL CLUB

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

MARCH 2014

POLICY SUMMARY

WHAT IS AND IS NOT IN SCOPE:
This Policy is about the tools that the Club will use in its communication strategy.

This Policy is not about the tools that individuals use in their day-to-day communication; however, the Club's Code of Conduct will be enacted as a result of any individual issue or behaviour arising that is considered to place the Club into disrepute.

THE EFL CONTEXT

The *Ferntree Gully Football Club* supports the Eastern Football League's (EFL) guidelines when using social media - whereby it states:

DO'S:
- Use common sense
- Always respect the EFL, its clubs, competitors, players, fans and sponsors
- Tweet and update your Facebook status regularly
- Promote stories about you and your club with links
- Interact with your followers and friends
- Follow each other and chat with each other
- Talk about life outside footy
- Have fun

DON'TS
- Never act like everything you upload is private
- Don't forget the EFL and its clubs follow you
- Don't abuse the EFL, its clubs, fans, competitors and sponsors
- Never post photos that are inappropriate (ie drinking, nudity, etc)
- Ignore haters - don't respond to them.

The EFL board currently has powers - under law 6.1 - to review matters of behavior that it considers to be conduct unbecoming of a member, player or official. This includes behavior on the internet and its social media platforms. Any matters brought to the attention of the league will be dealt with by an Investigation Committee formed as a subcommittee of the board.

THE FERNTREE GULLY FOOTBALL CLUB CONTEXT

BREACHES OF USE:
The *Ferntree Gully Football Club* hereby announces that it has a 'Zero Tolerance' on any breaches – there is to be no bringing the Club into disrepute; no racial and/or religious vilification; no derogatory remarks towards our Club, other Clubs, the EFL, and/or individuals.

Inappropriate use of electronic communication includes but is not limited to making or posting inappropriate comments against players, clubs (ours and others), club officials, match officials, league itself or its delegates ó which is hurtful, discriminatory or offensive in nature. Any person who believes that they have been the victims of inappropriate electronic communication should report the matter to any member of the Committee or to the Clubøs Discrimination Officer (either in writing or verbally) along with any evidence that may assist the Club in investigating the concern. The Club will undertake to investigate the concern at its discretion. Matters which are deemed by the Executive to be more serious in nature may be reported to external to the club authorities (ie: the Police) ó should this be the case, it will be reported to them by the Club President.

Non-compliance with the general outline above will result in disciplinary action for any violations - as outlined in the Club's Constitution and Club's Code of Conduct. A rule of thumb is: "If you don't have something positive to say, then do not say anything at all."

RESPONSIBILITY:
As a player and/or member of the *Ferntree Gully Football Club,* it is everyoneøs responsibility to implement this Policy.

RESPECTFUL CONVERSATIONS AND INFORMATION:
The *Ferntree Gully Football Club* also recognises that as providers of information we have a duty of care to convey information to all players and members in a respectful and courteous manner ó both verbally and in written form.

The *Ferntree Gully Football Club* Executive and General Committee understand and accept its responsibility to this effect; and to abide by the Clubøs Code of Conduct. Equally, it is imperative that all players and parents/guardians and friends also abide by the Clubs Code of conduct.

Ferntree Gully Football Club
Executive & General Committee
March 2014

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

PURPOSE:
To develop a Club Policy in the use of Social Media – including the use of Social Networking sites such as Facebook amongst others.

Note: This policy applies only to the Ferntree Gully Football Club related sites and issues; and is not meant to infringe upon any person's personal interaction or commentary online.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:
The *Ferntree Gully Football Club* acknowledges and recognises the growing reliance and use of information technology (such as internet, website, Facebook, Twitter, e-mail, Flickr, etc) for communication. They are all vital parts of modern communication strategies between organisations and clubs with their customers, sponsors, stakeholders, players and members.

The *Ferntree Gully Football Club* also acknowledges and recognizes the importance of the Internet in shaping public thinking about our Club and our sponsors, current and potential products, players and members, partners and stakeholders, and customers.

The *Ferntree Gully Football Club* further acknowledges and recognizes the importance of our players, members and key stakeholders joining in and helping shape our Club through interaction in Social Media amongst other means. So, our Club is committed to supporting your right to interact knowledgeably and socially within the Social Media context.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:
Consequently, this Policy aims to help us make appropriate decisions about our Club related Web site and other interactive sites, postings on video or picture sharing sites, or in the comments that you make online on blogs, elsewhere on the public Internet, and in responding to comments from posters either publicly or via email.

These guidelines will help us open up a respectful, knowledgeable interaction with people on the Internet. They also protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of our Club, players and members, our sponsors, current and potential products, players and members, partners, and customers.

THE FERNTREE GULLY FOOTBALL CLUB CONTEXT:
The *Ferntree Gully Football Club* embarked on the Social Media journey in the mid 2000's via our participation in the EFL sponsored Sporting-Pulse Website infrastructure. However, the Club continued to produce paper based newsletters and the website was minimally used.

In 2011, the Club established the first version of its stand-alone website. This proved to be an important addition to the club as it became the major source of communication internally with all players and club members; and externally with other interested persons.

In 2013, the Club introduced electronic newsletters; and the club started to post formal Club Policies and documents on to the website for all to access ó thus improving transparency in decision making and communication. Further in the same year, the Club established a facebook site; and developed a TeamApp which was initially minimally used but will become a major communication tool in season 2014.

The Clubøs use of Social Media (and the subsequent use of Social Networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and TeamApp) is the focus of this Policy document. Along with every opportunity though comes ÷riskø

SOCIAL MEDIA – A DEFINITION:
The term *'Media'* is generally defined as an instrument of communication ó for example newspaper, radio, television or film is commonly known as ÷Industrial Mediaø This form of communication is generally a one-way street where you can read a newspaper or listen to a report on television, but you have very limited ability to give your thoughts on the matter.

In contrast, *'Social Media'* is a social instrument of communication ó it is a two-way street that gives you the ability to communicate too. In Web terms, this would be a website that doesn't just give you information, but interacts with you while giving you that information. This interaction can be as simple as asking for your comments or letting you vote on an article, or it can be as complex as Flixster recommending movies to you based on the ratings of other people with similar interests. Any website that invites you to interact with the site (to share information and resources; and can include text, audio, video, images, podcasts, and other multimedia communications), and could include the interaction with other visitors, falls into the definition of Social Media.

Social Media may include (although is not limited to):
- social networking sites (eg Facebook, Myspace, LinkedIn, Bebo, Yammer)
- Social video and photo sharing websites (eg Flickr, YouTube, Picasa)
- blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs
- blogs hosted by media outlets (eg ÷commentsø or ÷your sayø feature in major newspapers)
- micro-blogging (eg Twitter)
- wikis and online collaborations (eg Wikipedia)
- forums, discussion boards and groups (eg Google groups, Whirlpool)
- vod and podcasting
- online multiplayer gaming platforms (eg World of Warcraft, Second life)
- instant messaging (including SMS)
- geo-spatial tagging (Foursquare)

FACEBOOK – A DEFINITION:
The literature tells us that **Facebook** is a social networking service and website launched in February 2004, operated and privately owned by Facebook Inc. As of April 2012, it is estimated that Facebook has more than 900 million active users. Users must register before using the site, after which they may create a personal profile, add other users as friends, and exchange messages, including automatic notifications when they update their profile. Additionally, users may join common-

interest user groups, organized by workplace, school or college, or other characteristics, and categorize their friends into lists such as õPeople from Workö or õClose Friendsö ó including sporting clubs. Facebook allows any users who declare themselves to be at least 13 years old to become registered users of the site. A January 2009 Compete.com study ranked Facebook as the most used social networking service by worldwide monthly active users.

Facebookøs growth as an Internet social networking site has met criticism on a range of issues, including online privacy, child safety, and the inability to terminate accounts without first manually deleting the content.

While in theory Facebook requires users to be over 13, the verification process is easily deceived. According to a May 2011 *Consumer Reports* survey, there are 7.5 million children under 13 with accounts and 5 million under 10, violating the siteøs terms of service.

It is reported that: õFacebook itself is not unsafe but it can be potentially unsafe depending on the way you use it. Children can be more vulnerable in the virtual world and might give out more details than they intend to, as they are more trusting. There are also warnings to parents to be on guard about the various malware that their computer may get through some of the games children play on Facebook.ö

FACEBOOK PAGE:
Facebook ÷Pagesø are for businesses, organizations and brands to share their stories and connect with people. You can customize Pages by adding apps, posting stories, hosting events and more. Engage and grow your audience by posting regularly. People who like a Facebook Page will get updates in their news feeds.

A Facebook page is created and managed from an existing Facebook user or users personal accounts. Only the official representative of an organization, business, celebrity or band is permitted to create or update a Page.

The important thing to note is that anybody with access to the internet can view a page. This means nobody is excluded and the purpose of communicating with club members, players and friends is achieved with one application.

Technology also allows for us to use the website as a conduit to the Facebook page by dynamically displaying Facebook page updates.

BENEFITS ON THE USE OF FACEBOOK:
Facebook when used appropriately can be an effective Club tool, and can offer to:
- share information easily, effectively and efficiently;
- save time and effort for club volunteers and administrators;
- enhance our Clubøs reputation;
- bring in more members and sponsors;
- exhibit leadership in the use and enhancement of available technology amongst our sporting club colleagues;
- transform our strategic thinking as to future opportunities at our club;
- prepare us for the future;
- communicate effectively with members and supporters; and

- remain a relevant forward thinking Club.

The Eastern Football League (EFL), to whom we are an affiliate member, has encouraged our Club to optimize technology and the use of electronic forms of communication. The Australian Football League (AFL) and the EFL themselves use many of these forms of communication.

In order to achieve this, Policy Guidelines need to be developed in order to exert some control over how we as a Club will use electronic media; to articulate what is and is not permissible; and to determine who can and cannot post items.

WHY CONSIDER TECHNOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENTS:
The *Ferntree Gully Football Club* has embraced the new Social Media technology by upgrading its website; and also wishes to further enhance the opportunities afforded to it by embracing other available functionalities. The Club wants to be able to:
1. Use an information sharing medium which will give immediate information to players and members;
2. A quick, inexpensive and very effective way to communicate with players and members;
3. Drive players and members to use the website even more than it is currently used;
4. Further promote our sponsors;
5. Further promote our Club to increase our member base (and thus increase exposure to our sponsors);
6. Market club merchandise;
7. Promote come-and-try days; and
8. Post photos and calendar events.

The *Ferntree Gully Football Club* is also conscious that many other affiliated organisations and sporting bodies are heading in the same direction; and that therefore we need to prepare for such developments and enhancements into the future should we continue to want to be ***'Proud, Professional, Innovative and United'*** ó as per the Clubøs Strategic Plan.

This matter has been discussed with the EFL who have encouraged our Club to proceed with the technological advancements available.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
In principle, it is recommended that the *Ferntree Gully Football Club*:
- Continue to upgrade and fully enhance its Social Media applications (ie: Website).
- Continue to upgrade and enhance the use of Social Networking (ie: Facebook, Twitter, TeamApp) as per the Policy Guidelines.
- Encourage all players, members, sponsors and supporters to register on the Club website in order to receive all up-to-date information, news and views.

This Policy Guideline aims to provide a basis for the responsible use of Social Media (including applications such as the Clubøs Facebook, Twitter and TeamApp); recognise and identify the shortcomings of the use of Social Media; and to develop strategies and guidelines to mitigate against issues arising.

HOW WILL FACEBOOK BE USED AT THE FERNTREE GULLY FOOTBALL CLUB:

Facebook will be used as an authorised two-way communication strategy from the Club Executive and General Committee to all players and members with the aim to:

1. Use Social Media to provide immediate information to players and members;
2. A quick, inexpensive and very effective way to communicate with players and members;
3. Drive players and members to use the website even more than it is currently used;
4. Further promote our sponsors;
5. Further promote our Club to increase our member base (and thus increase exposure to our sponsors);
6. Market club merchandise;
7. Promote come-and-try days; and
8. Post photos and calendar events.

RISKS:

The *Ferntree Gully Football Club* also recognises that there are risks with the introduction of any new technological initiative – to which the Club wishes to be informed of any concerns with the Social Media Policy.

POLICY REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant, practical and that it reflects community expectations and legal requirements. The Policy will be reviewed in the first instance by October/November 2014; and thereafter annually as part of the club's Strategic Plan Review process.

SUMMARY:

This document was tabled at the March 2014 General Committee Meeting and the above stated Policy was voted upon and unanimously endorsed.

Ferntree Gully Football Club
Executive & General Committee
March 2014