

Principles

The Travellers' Times (The TT) www.travellerstimes.org.uk is an award-winning strategic project of Rural Media www.ruralmedia.co.uk. The TT comprises a national biennial magazine, website, and media and communications training for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities across the UK. Through partnership working The TT promotes the respect, recognition, rights and inclusion of these diverse communities with the aim of building capacity and empowering Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.

The Travellers' Times Facebook page is where we showcase articles that are published on our website and any important news and stories published by others.

Scope

This document covers all aspects of community interaction and moderation on The Travellers' Times website and Facebook page including comments on blogs or articles.

Moderation aims

The Travellers' Times website and Facebook page provides a growing number of opportunities for readers who wish to discuss content we publish, or debate issues more generally. Our aim is to ensure this platform is inclusive and safe, and that The Travellers' Times website is the place on the net where you will always find lively, entertaining and, above all, intelligent discussions.

Community standards

There are 10 simple guidelines which we expect all participants in the community areas of The Travellers' Times website and the Travellers' Times Facebook page to abide by, all of which directly inform our approach to community moderation (detailed below). These apply across the site, while moderation decisions are also informed by the context in which comments are made.

1. We welcome debate and dissent, but personal attacks (on authors, other users or any individual), persistent trolling and mindless abuse will not be tolerated. The key to maintaining The Travellers' Times website and Facebook Page as an inviting space is to focus on intelligent discussion of topics.

2. We acknowledge criticism of the articles we publish, but will not allow misrepresentation of The Travellers' Times, our journalists or community journalists to be published on our website. For the sake of robust debate, we will distinguish between constructive, focused argument and smear tactics.

3. We understand that people often feel strongly about issues debated on the site, but we will consider removing any content that others might find extremely offensive or threatening. Please respect other people's views and beliefs and consider your impact on others when making your contribution.

4. We reserve the right to redirect or curtail conversations which descend into flame-wars based on ingrained partisanship or generalisations. We don't want to stop people discussing topics they are enthusiastic about, but we do ask users to find ways of sharing their views that do not feel divisive, threatening or toxic to others.

5. We will not tolerate racism, sexism, homophobia or other forms of hate-speech, or contributions that could be interpreted as such. We recognise the difference between criticising a particular government, organisation, community or belief and attacking people on the basis of their race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age.

6. We will remove any content that may put us in legal jeopardy, such as potentially libellous or defamatory postings, or material posted in potential breach of copyright.

7. We will remove any posts that are obviously commercial or otherwise spam-like. Our aim is that this site should provide a space for people to interact with our content and each other, and we actively discourage commercial entities passing themselves off as individuals, in order to post advertising material or links. This may also apply to people or organisations who frequently post propaganda or external links without adding substantively to the quality of the discussion on The Travellers' Times website and Facebook page.

8. Keep it relevant. We know that some conversations can be wide-ranging, but if you post something which is unrelated to the original topic ("off-topic") then it may be removed, in order to keep the thread on track. This also applies to queries or comments about moderation, which should not be posted as comments.

9. Be aware that you may be misunderstood, so try to be clear about what you are saying, and expect that people may understand your contribution differently than you intended. Remember that text isn't always a great medium for conversation: tone of voice (sarcasm, humour and so on) doesn't always come across when using words on a screen. **You can help to keep The Travellers' Times community areas open to all viewpoints by maintaining a reasonable tone, even in unreasonable circumstances.**

10. The platform belongs to The Travellers' Times, but the conversation belongs to everybody. We want this to be a welcoming space for intelligent discussion, and we expect participants to help us achieve this by notifying us of potential problems and helping each other to keep conversations inviting and appropriate. If you spot something problematic in community interaction areas, please report it. **When we all take responsibility for maintaining an appropriate and constructive environment, the debate itself is improved and everyone benefits.**

In short:

- If you **act with maturity and consideration** for other users, you should have no problems.
- **Don't be unpleasant.** Demonstrate and share the intelligence, wisdom and humour we know you possess.
- **Take some responsibility for the quality of the conversations in which you're participating.** Help make this an intelligent place for discussion and it will be.

Moderation approach

Participants who seriously, persistently or wilfully ignore the community standards, participation guidelines or terms and conditions will have their posting privileges for all The Travellers' Times community areas withdrawn.

This is not an action that we take lightly or arbitrarily. However, we are aiming to create and maintain an online experience consistent with Travellers' Times values, and we reserve the right to make decisions which we feel support that. Please be aware that moderators may contact you by email in relation to your participation, especially where an issue comes up in relation to these community standards. Any advice they give/request they make should be adhered to, as our moderators are employed to enforce these community standards and create a constructive environment for everyone who contributes to our site.

We will, when necessary, remove user postings or comments from our articles, and blog posts. *

If a contribution to The Travellers' Times website is perceived as breaching the community guidelines set out above, then it will be removed by the community team, in the interests of keeping community areas of the site appropriate for the vast majority of the people who visit.

(*NB: We will not edit user posts to change the meaning, spelling, or anything else intended by the user. Even if only part of a comment or posting is perceived as breaching the community guidelines, the whole thing may be removed. Also, when a comment or post is removed for any of the reasons above, it is sometimes necessary to delete subsequent messages which refer to explicitly or quote from the original (removed) comment, in order to preserve some notion of conversational thread. This may also happen because a later comment quotes directly the problematic bits of the original comment, which just perpetuates the problem. In such cases not every deletion will be marked individually.)

We reserve the right to take steps or implement measures which we hope will benefit the whole community of The Travellers' Times community participants.

Because we are ultimately responsible for everything which appears on this site, all actions and decisions taken by our moderators are final. Unfortunately, the huge (and growing) quantity of user content on The Travellers' Times website and Facebook page means that we can't enter into correspondence regarding specific moderation activity, although all correspondence will be read.

If you have suggestions or questions about any aspect of community participation on The Travellers' Times website, you can write to travellerstimes@ruralmedia.co.uk .

Please mark all queries clearly in the subject line (e.g. *Question about moderation decision on "xxxx article"*)

Note about community content

The views expressed in community areas of this site do not necessarily reflect or represent the views of The TT its staff or contributors.

About this document

This policy is a collaborative document, created by representatives of Rural Media and The Travellers' Times editorial team including the Editor-at-Large, CEO, Chair and Board of Trustees, together with The Travellers' Times Editor.

It has evolved over many years of participation on Rural Media community projects and The Travellers' Times, and aims to reflect best practice in community management as well as The Travellers' Times editorial values.

It is regularly reviewed and refreshed, so please bookmark this page and check back frequently.