Mattermost Moderation

What is **Moderation**, why do we need it and who does it?

These questions arise with any open chat service like **Mattermost**, and we have to have guidelines on what is acceptable. Sometimes, posts can get heated and hurt people's feelings, so some sort of feedback and, possibly, corrective action, is necessary. That's what **Moderation** is all about - keeping the posts within agreed limits of acceptability for all our users.

So, who does it? Well, we're a **Self Organising System** and, like it says in the Online Behaviour Guide: "We owe each other a duty of care to make our presence on our communications platforms a comfortable and beneficial experience." Maintaining good behaviour falls to all of us, and we need to be careful to maintain this when starting or responding to a post.

Now, there will be times when you may find a post that fails to meet what you feel are acceptable standards. You may, of course, decide to reply to it directly yourself, and explain why you find it unacceptable - possibly suggesting, to the poster, a potentially more acceptable way of making their point. Alternatively, you might bring it to the attention of the channels's Team Admin(s) by Direct Message - you can find their usernames in the Channel Member drop down list.

However, there will sometimes be a need for more formal oversight, particularly with channels like **Town Square** and **Off Topic**, where greater numbers of members congregate and more diverse topics are discussed. This is where our own **UK and Regional Moderators** can help. Their objective is to basically keep an eye out for posts which may not be appropriate either in terms of content, wording or subject. Our Moderators are members of XR UK and have previous experience in looking after spaces like Mattermost, so you're in good hands. In order to moderate fairly, they will act anonymously - that is, they won't use their normal Mattermost username, but a special username containing the Moderator term, like `@UKModerator3`. This will allow our Moderators to be able to use MatterMost as ordinary rebels themselves , avoiding any interaction with other users being constrained by knowing they are Moderators, and helps to protect them from personal harassment or entreatment to restore edited/deleted posts.

Moderators will be able to **edit and/or delete** any posts they find unacceptable. Users will be warned if their posts are in conflict with our criteria for acceptability and, in the first instance, be asked to rephrase the offending post and, possibly, to refrain from continuing with the topic. If this is not possible, because the original poster refuses - or the post itself needs to be removed - then the post will be deleted. On edit or deletion, the reason for this action will be published, by the Moderator, in the channel. Further discussion on this action, or the post itself, will be limited by the discretion of the Moderator/s. Hopefully, the issue will be resolved amicably and an agreement reached by all parties. However, continuing the discussion may result in further a warning and/or subsequent action to bring the matter to a close.

As stated above, applying the moderation function is not a means to control discussion, but to make our chat space as comfortable and acceptable to everyone in it. There will be problems but, with supportive and constructive moderation, we will achieve this aim and minimise disruptive and negative behaviour in our Mattermost channels.
