

Parks and Green Spaces: How to use social media to promote your organisation

You'll find this guide helpful if you're starting out with social media and need to know how to use it to promote your group or organisation.

It will guide you through how to use Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram, as well as show you how to plan and write posts for your different audiences.

Why use social media?

Social media is a great way to promote your organisation, no matter how large or small you are.

Social media is free to use and can:

- Build awareness for your group/organisation
 - People can find you from search engines, directly on social platforms, or through friend's posts and interests
- Encourage engagement
 - People can like, comment and share your posts with others promoting your content to a wide audience of likeminded people
- Be used for support
 - It's an easy way for people to get in touch with you. They can comment on a post or send a message and know that it's reached you.

Before you get started, there are a few things you should know to help you make the most of your new social media identity.

You'll learn how to create a good post, what platforms might be best to consider, and how to use them effectively.

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Facebook

Who uses Facebook?

Facebook is the dominant social media platform in the UK.

- Of all internet users in the UK, 78% use Facebook
- 52% identify as women and 48% men (based on users aged 18 and older)
- Users 65 years and older are the fastest-growing group on Facebook

Why do they use it?

There are many reasons people use Facebook. To:

- Keep up to date with friends, family, acquaintances
- Post photos of their life to share with their Facebook friends
- Chat with friends online
- Share interesting/funny posts with their friends
- Find out about local issues, business and organisations

When and where do people use Facebook?

Most people use Facebook on mobile while they're:

- On the move
- Doing something else

They tend to use it as a distraction from other things happening in their life.

What are the strengths and Weakness of Facebook?

Strengths

- Free
- Powerful targeting
- Easy to use
- Biggest social media platform
- Posts last longer
- Create events, groups, polls,
- Post scheduling
- Host files
- Photo albums
- Engaging
- Can be used like a website

Weaknesses

- Users expect responses to messages within a day
- Comments should be responded to
- Very public – reputation management is important

What do you need to make Facebook a success?

There is a certain amount of planning involved on order to help run a Facebook page successfully. Content that people engage with is shown to more people, and possibly more than once. You need to be able to:

- Plan what you want to post about and what you want to get people to do as a result of reading your posts
- Find or create content to post about
- Schedule your posts
- Publish around one post per day
- Monitor and reply to comments/messages everyday
- Create and events/groups that you need
- Evaluate what posts and content is and isn't working

What should a good post include?

A good Facebook post should help your audience to do something. It might be as simple as feel happy. You can do this by including.

- Image
- Written text
- Call to action – what you want people to do e.g.:
 - Read an article
 - Watch a video
 - Comment on your post or comment with a picture
 - Share your post

Twitter

Who uses Twitter?

Globally, Twitter has 145 million global users use Twitter every day.

- 63% of Twitter users are between 35 – 65 years old.
- Twitter is more popular with males than females. 66% of Twitter users are male.

Why do they use Twitter?

People use Twitter for several reasons. They'll use it to:

- Follow friends, likeminded individuals, celebrities, people in the public eye, and organisations
- Keep up to date with news, hobbies, professional interests, popular culture
- Take part in informal networking with people of similar interests
- Contact organisations for customer service enquiries

When and where do people use Twitter?

People use Twitter on their mobile and on their computer.

- People using it as part of their professional life, might use it on their computer while at work.
- More generally, people will use it on their mobile as a distraction tool.
- It can also be used to join in national events with hashtags, such as the Olympics, or live TV shows.

What are the strengths and weakness of Twitter?

Strengths

- Free
- Informal
- Networking easily
- Easy to use
- Short posts
- Create polls
- Post scheduling
- Easy for chatting
- Quick communication

Weaknesses

- Users expect responses to messages quickly, no more than an hour or so
- Global posts – reputation management
- Of the moment – very now
- Frequent posting needed

What you need to make Twitter a success

Twitter is a fast-paced social media platform where tweets are usually relevant for only a few hours at most. You'll need to:

- Plan your posts
- Find or create content for your posts
- Schedule up to three posts per day
- Retweet interesting stories with comments
- Monitor your feed and notifications throughout the day to reply to tweets, messages, and jump on trends
- Evaluate what post and content work and what doesn't.

What should a good post include?

A good Twitter post, just like Facebook should help your audience to do something. It might be as simple as feeling more knowledgeable about something. You can do this by including:

- Image (not always necessary on twitter)
- Written text
- Call to action – what you want people to do e.g.:
 - Read an article or watch a video
 - Retweet
 - Comment

LinkedIn

Who uses LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is a professional social network, so the platform has a different audience to other social media platforms.

- 75.6% of the working population has a profile on LinkedIn in the United Kingdom.
- There are 27 million profiles in the UK, with 60% male and 40% female.
- The more a person earns the more likely they are to have an account: over 50% of people earning £45k+ are on the site compared to just 22% earning up to £14k.
- However, research found that only 21% of users were active on the platform once a day, with 63% using it just once a week or less.

Why do they use LinkedIn?

People use LinkedIn in a professional capacity. This includes:

- Networking
- Job hunting
- Professional development
- Profile building
- Lead generation
- Promoting their organisation

When and where do people use LinkedIn?

57% of people access LinkedIn through their mobile phone.

People use LinkedIn at:

- Work for their organisation, or personal professional reasons
- Home, for profile building or job hunting.

What are the strengths and weakness of LinkedIn

Strengths

- Free
- Official 'business' profile
- Employees/members can show they are employed by you
- Mainly used for lead generation or job searches

Weaknesses

- Not very engaging – people have a specific reason for going to LinkedIn
- Mainly a CV and profile building network

What you need to make LinkedIn a success

Since people tend to use LinkedIn less frequently than other platforms, you don't need to post as often to LinkedIn. To use LinkedIn, you'll need to:

- Plan your posts – think about posting one to two posts per month.
- Monitor your account to check for messages and comments – every few days, possibly once per week. If you have a campaign that is time sensitive, you may need to check daily depending on what you've planned.
- Evaluate what works and what doesn't.

What should a good post include?

A good LinkedIn post should be informative, and generally professional in nature. You should include:

- Image
- Written text
- Call to action – what you want people to do e.g.:
 - click a link
 - leave a comment
 - share your post

Instagram

Who uses Instagram

In the UK 24 million people use Instagram.

The platform has slightly more female users than male users: (54% females vs 46% males) and skews to a younger audience, 75% of 18-24 year olds are on Instagram.

Why do they use it

Instagram is an aspirational social media platform with high quality beautiful photos.

People use it for:

- Inspiration and motivation
- New ideas
- See snapshots of life
- Using hashtags to follow photos of a hobby they enjoy
- Following organisations, celebrities, friends etc

How do people use Instagram

Instagram is slightly different than other social media platforms. Instagram focuses on images rather than text.

When someone is using Instagram they look through images, and stop at one they like. Then they will read the text underneath the image. It's important to have good quality, pretty or interesting images on Instagram in order to get attention from people.

When and where do people use Instagram

- Mobile phone
- On the move, waiting for something, or as a distraction.
- Most people who use Instagram use it daily.
- What are the strengths and weakness of Instagram?

Strengths

- Free
- Official 'business' profile
- Option to post 'Stories', which disappear after 24 hours so can be used for more informal, 'slice of life' posts
- If you have more than 10,000 followers, you can add 'swipe up' links to your Stories
- Stories can be very interactive, featuring polls, quizzes and Q&As
- Instagram TV allows you to post longer videos (up to 1 hour)
- Instagram Live allows you to livestream – great for events

Weaknesses

- Focus on aesthetics can mean it's hard for content/photos not made by professionals to get traction
- Commenting system isn't very user-friendly, so less conversational than Twitter or Facebook

What you need to make Instagram a success

Your account should have a clear focus – people will follow expecting to see similar content in future. Try to make your account cohesive in both theme and aesthetic. Research popular, relevant hashtags and use them to make your post discoverable. Follow similar accounts and their followers in order to find people who may be interested in your content. Engage with other users' posts by commenting and liking.

What should a good post include?

- Good photo
 - It should be in focus, not blurry
- Try to make your posts positive.
 - If your post is about a negative thing, try to turn it into a more positive outlook.
- Short amount of text
- Hashtags

Create a social media strategy and communications plan

These recommendations are a guide to getting started

The more you post and monitor, the more you will start to see patterns in what works and what doesn't.

Adapt your content and schedule to what works best for as you go.

What else will you be doing to support your work?

Social media can't and won't be able to do everything for you.

Use different channels to get your message out to reach more people:

- Social Media
- Newsletter
- Posters/banners
- Door knocking
- Letters to local MP
- Notices at local gym /parks /pubs /supermarkets /village halls
- Flyering/leafleting
- Petitions
- Local press (adverts/editorial)
- Local businesses' newsletters
- Local groups

What is your vision, and how will you achieve it?

When you think about what you want to say with social media, it's important to understand why you're saying it, who you're saying it to, and what you want them to feel or do as a result.

It helps you stay consistent and on target with your content.

You can use the following template, alongside the audience profiling tool below, to help keep your messages and content aligned with your visions, goals, and objectives.

Vision	What are your goals?	Objective	How will social media help you achieve your goals?	What audience will this appeal to?	What kind of content helps you achieve your objective?	How you will measure your success?
	Goal 1	1				
		2				
		3				
	Goal 2	1				
		2				
		3				
	Goal 3	1				
		2				
		3				

Who is your audience? Who are you talking to?

When you're planning your social media content (in your marketing and communications in general), it's important to think about who it is you're talking to and why they should care what you have to say?

It's easy to think that people will automatically care about what you're saying, but you need to understand what will make them listen to you. Here are a few questions to ask when planning out who you are trying to talk. These questions will help you

to build up a better picture of who they are, and how you can get them to care about your content:

- Who are you targeting?
- What do they care about?
- How will they benefit from your plans?
- How do you want them to feel?
- What do you want them to do?
- How are they most likely to see/hear about you online?

You can write about your audience in the audience profiling tool below – this will help you when writing your content. It’s best to segment your audiences into different categories. This will help you create more targeted content.

For example, young people with no children, who are likely to be single, still studying or starting out at work, would need to be in a different category to parents of young children. The priorities, interests and motivations of these two groups are likely to be very different.

Try to have no more than three to five audience segments. It can get too complicated, and if you’re trying to be all things to all people your message will become diluted and lose clarity.

It’s important to think about where your audiences will find you offline too. Social media is a busy place for a user, the general rule is that people need to see/hear a message several times before they take an action on it. Use all the communications tools that are at your disposal.

Audience profiling tool:

	Audience 1	Audience 2
Profile		
What do they care about?		
How will they benefit from you?		
How do you want them to feel after reading your posts?		
What do you want them to do?		
Where will they find you online?		
Where will they find you offline?		

Plan your content

Plan your content for your audiences, not you

Now that you know who your audiences are, you can start finding and creating content. Remember to think about your audience to decide what to look for or create.

- Check your audience chart
- Who needs what kind of messaging?
- Where will you tell them, e.g. Facebook, Newsletters, Message boards?
- Write/find your content

Think of what you want people to do

KFC - (Know, Feel, Call to action)

It's unlikely that people will commit to something the first time they see it. They will need to see messages several times before acting on it.

- Get people to care about what you're doing, and show why it's important to them
- Show outcomes/results/milestones as well as activities - prove you are doing something for their benefit
- Have themes across your work that appeal to different audiences

Write for your audience, not you

- Your audience may not understand specific jargon, make your language clear and relatable.
- Your audience need to care about what you're doing, show them why something is good
- Your audience need to know why what you are doing is beneficial
- Make sure your photos are engaging, and positive

For example, if you'd like to inspire younger people to get involved with your local 'neighbourhood plan' group:

Instead of:

Get involved in the local *local area* neighbourhood plan

Try:

Need cheaper rent? You can help us campaign for affordable housing in *local area*. Join our Facebook group.

Photography is just as important

Remember to use engaging, positive photos with your post. Photos with people looking at the camera are particularly effective.

Instead of:



Get involved in the local *local area* neighbourhood plan

Try:



Need cheaper rent? You can help us campaign for affordable housing in *local area*. Join our Facebook group.

Scheduling and monitoring

- Once you've written your posts, schedule them
- Throughout the day/week, monitor your accounts for comments
- Each week, check how your content has performed
- Do more of what worked, stop doing what didn't work, and try new things to engage your audience

You can use the template below to help you plan who you'll be targeting, with what message and what platform.

Remember, do what works for your audience. There's no point creating an Instagram account if your followers aren't likely to be on it.

January	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
			01-Jan		02-Jan	03-Jan	04-Jan	05-Jan
	Audience							
	Content							
	category							
	Facebook							
	Twitter							
	LinkedIn							
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
		06-Jan	07-Jan	08-Jan	09-Jan	10-Jan	11-Jan	12-Jan
Audience								
Content								
category								
Facebook								
Twitter								
LinkedIn								
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday		
	13-Jan	14-Jan	15-Jan	16-Jan	17-Jan	18-Jan	19-Jan	
Audience								
Content								
category								
Facebook								
Twitter								
LinkedIn								
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday		
	20-Jan	21-Jan	22-Jan	23-Jan	24-Jan	25-Jan	26-Jan	
Audience								
Content								
category								
Facebook								
Twitter								
LinkedIn								
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday		
	27-Jan	28-Jan	29-Jan	30-Jan	31-Jan	01-Feb	02-Feb	
Audience								
Content								
category								
Facebook								
Twitter								
LinkedIn								

Increasing your followers

Although having a large number of followers may seem important, it's much better to focus on the quality of your followers.

A following of 10,000 people may appear impressive. But if those 10,000 followers don't like, share, or sign up to your content, then this number has little value. It's much more important to focus on the actions your followers take: liking, sharing or commenting on your posts, signing up to your groups, or buying from your shop. If users often comment, share, or click links on your post, this is known as having **high audience engagement**.

To help grow you audience and increase your engagement, try doing the following:

- Include links to your social media accounts on your other marketing channels (websites/leaflets etc)
- Follow other people and they are more likely to follow you back
- Like posts/tweets that are relevant to your work

- Get people to post and tag you in activities they are doing for you
- Share posts on your personal accounts and invite friends to like/follow
- Ask influential people to post about your account
- Consider working with others in your sector to work together to promote and share each other's posts

Digital tools to help

There are various online tools to help you schedule and track your content.

- For scheduling your content try Hootsuite or Buffer.
 - It will make life easier for you to schedule your content in advance.
- For shortening and tracking links, try bit.ly
 - It means that you can fit more content in a post, and you can track how many clicks your links received.
- Track and analyse the success of your posts using tools such as Twitter Analytics, Facebook Insights and Instagram Insights

Good luck

Remember, these tips are just to help you get started on your social media journey. Evaluate your content and then repeat and refine the actions that worked for each audience.