



This information note is one of a series produced by the Community Woodlands Association. It describes the various aspects to consider when planning social media engagement for your organisation and offers tips and resources for successful use.

Why do you need social media?

For most of us, social media networks are now part of our daily lives and have become indispensable communication tools. They allow individuals to share moments of their lives but are also widely used by organisations and businesses.

Which platform? Know your audience.

Social media can be time consuming and you might not have the capacity to be present on every one of the main social media platforms. In this case, you need to be strategic in terms of the audience you would like to target so you can choose the appropriate platform.

Facebook is the most used platform across generations. Around 70% of adults use this network. Younger people tend to prefer Instagram, but still hold a Facebook account to stay connected via the Messenger app (included in Facebook) or to keep an eye on local events.

It is a good platform to share conversations, longer reads (e.g. blog notes) as well as pictures, videos and “stories”. It can be linked to an Instagram account to publish jointly on both platforms.

Within Facebook you can create a public page for your organisation on which you can promote your activities as well as set up specific pages for events. You can also create private or public groups where people can share photos of your woodland and communicate with other members.

Twitter is used by around 25% of adults. It is used to have conversations or share information. You can engage with other businesses, stakeholders, politicians, or journalists. You can upload small videos (less than 2min20) and up to four pictures at a time.

When you have a longer statement to make, you can develop your thoughts through “threads” (a series of tweets linked together).

Instagram consists exclusively of images and video content; this platform is more often used by younger generations and is fast growing. Many businesses and organisations are now on Instagram.

LinkedIn is useful to reach corporate partners such as big forestry companies or government agencies. It might also be a good way to recruit staff if you ever get this opportunity.

YouTube is not a social media platform per se, but it can be useful to have a YouTube channel if you create video content that you wish to publish on your website or share to a wider audience. YouTube is now owned by Google, and you can set up a YouTube channel by creating a Gmail/Google account.

Newer platforms such as TikTok or Snapchat are growing fast and are more popular with younger generations.

Who to manage it?

Identify who will lead on social media engagement. You might decide to have a designated social media person, or you may want to share the workload between several members of the group.

Ask yourself who is good/comfortable with social media and who has time to commit to it. It is possible to have different people to edit a Facebook page (people can be assigned “editor” or “admin”) or you can share your Twitter or Instagram login details to connect on multiple devices. If you decide to do this, make sure the tone you use in your posts is consistent across each post.

Create content

It is important to post regularly on the social media platform to keep a regular presence and grow your followers organically.

Visuals

It is proven that a post will have more engagement if it has a picture or a video. When posting a story, try to add a picture to illustrate or a short video (no more than 30 seconds). Add written information in bold and simple font. You can easily create visuals and graphics using [canva.com](https://www.canva.com).

Blog notes

Whenever you write a blog note on your website, you can share it on your social media to create relevant content.

International days

You can also celebrate [international days](#) and tell the world how your project/ woodlands fits into and what your community is going towards this (i.e. April 22 is Earth Day; May 22 is World Biodiversity Day etc...).

Live

When you are running a community or volunteering event, don't be afraid to "go live" (as long as all the people you are filming are happy for you to do so). This generates more content that people can look at to get an idea of what is happening in the woods.

Use Hashtags and tags

On Twitter and Instagram, you will generate more engagement if you use relevant and shared hashtags, e.g. CommunityWoods (which is the main hashtag used by CWA), #Forestry #ForestryScotland #Volunteering etc.

Share news

You don't have to create content from scratch. In some instances, you might want to share content such as online news articles relevant to your area, community woodland, blog posts from partners or even TV programs or podcasts.

Follow relevant organisations

Draw up a list of partner and similar groups and follow them on Twitter/Instagram/Facebook or LinkedIn. In doing so not only you keep yourself

in the loop and might get some inspiration from other practices, but it also enables you to get more visibility when you share their content.

Set up posts in advance

As mentioned above, social media can take a lot of your time. If there are events or publications that you can anticipate, you can use a social media tool such as [Hootsuite](#) to plan them in advance and set a time of publication.

Media form

Ensure all the quoted individuals or people present on pictures you send have given their consent. To do so, you can ask them to sign a media form prior to the publication of the story/photo.

Be aware of "trolls"

In the case of a community woodland, online haters and trolls might only occur on rare occasions but it is important to be aware that they do exist and to have an agreed [strategy for dealing with them](#). Do not give them attention and if you must respond stick to facts. You can also block and report them to the platform.

Community groups need to be careful not to confuse a member of the community who is critical and/or upset with a troll. This requires a different response and Comms Creative has [a helpful flowchart](#) for responding to genuine social media comments.

Top tips

- Tell a story: make your content interesting by turning facts into a story.
- Rule of 80-20: 80% of what you post should be informative, engaging, and interesting (something you read from the paper, interesting fact put in an engaging way) and only 20% should be promotional.
- Be strategic in the choice of your platforms.
- Keep a consistent, engaging tone throughout your posts.
- Get inspired by other social media engagement from other groups and reproduce what works well.
- Do plan your publications but allow yourself some flexibility.

- Be consistent and maintain momentum.
- Take pictures at each event you do. It creates up-to-date and varied content for your social media pages.
- Don't get stuck: if you're struggling with the platforms, there are plethora of tutorials out there. Just ask Google (or any other search engine) "how to....?".

Resources

Community Woodlands Association (advice and support for community woodlands)

<http://www.communitywoods.org>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/business/pages/manage>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nt2_HNhOhLI

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eh6BdkKPslo>

Instagram

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_2QnYYTK8no

Twitter

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-2Xomw92TQ>

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6o7qODwjEz8>

LinkedIn

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FnovWnhObs>

Hootsuite

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ztk6PXDIEjU>

Canva

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=un50Bs4BvZ8>

Dealing with Trolls

<https://charitydigital.org.uk/topics/topics/how-to-deal-with-social-media-trolls-9332>

Answering comments on social media

<https://commscreatives.com/2014/05/29/a-quick-guide-to-answering-people-who-use-social-media-to-talk-to-your-organisation/>

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