



# Social Media Guide



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# Introduction

This guide will provide an introduction to social media with advice and tips on how best to use it to benefit you and your community.

It will provide a brief overview of the main social media platforms, and a more in-depth look at how to use Facebook and Twitter.

If you would like any advice or help with setting up a social media account, speak to the Communications Team.



# Facebook

## What is it?

Facebook is the best known social network with more than 1.44 billion monthly active users worldwide and over 31 million in the UK alone.

## Who uses it?

The majority of the UK population; 60% of people in the UK have a Facebook account. In the UK, 49% of Facebook users are male and 51% are female.

The biggest user group is aged 25 to 34, followed by ages 35 to 44, but the growing user groups are aged 45 to 54 and aged 55 to 64. Latest research shows younger people are using Facebook less, with almost 1 million 12 to 24 year olds leaving the site in the past year.



## Best types of posts

- opinions
- photos and videos
- jokes
- links to articles
- news
- sharing other accounts' posts
- polls
- ... anything goes

This year (2018) it's estimated there will be 6.4 million over 55 year olds regularly using Facebook.



[www.facebook.com/buckinghamshirecouncil](http://www.facebook.com/buckinghamshirecouncil)

**Page name:**

Buckinghamshire Council

**Handle:** @BucksCouncil



# Twitter

## What is it?

Twitter is a micro-blogging site for people to communicate through the exchange of quick, frequent messages. People post tweets, which may contain photos, videos, links, and text. These messages are posted to your profile, sent to your followers, and are searchable on Twitter and through search engines.

## Who uses it?

Twitter users are predominantly male and mostly 18 – 29 year olds. 53% of Twitter users never post any updates. There are 317 million unique monthly users in the UK.



## Best types of posts

Tweets with images receive 18% more clicks than tweets without images. Images that include links are 86% more likely to be retweeted.



147



Tweet



@BucksCouncil



# Instagram

## What is it?

Instagram is a photo and video-sharing social media network that allows users to share content either publicly or privately to pre-approved followers.

## Who uses it?

There's a 50/50 split in terms of gender and 90% of Instagram users are under the age of 35.



@BucksCouncil



## Best types of posts

It's all about images on Instagram, but you don't have to be a professional photographer. Any interesting or striking images, graphics or inspirational quotes work well and light-hearted content tends to be most popular. Use hashtags to increase the number of people who see and like your posts.



# Snapchat

## What is it?

A video and photo sharing application. Content disappears from the application either immediately or after 24 hours.

## Who uses it?

Snapchat users tend to be younger people; more than half of UK Snapchat users are under 35, while 71% of British Snapchat users are under the age of 45. The core user base is women; 55% of British adults who access the app are female.



## Best types of posts

Fun, light-hearted images and videos, often using novelty filters.



# YouTube

## What is it?

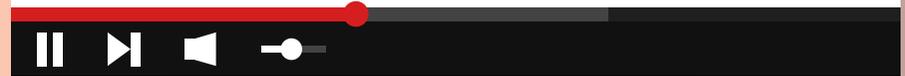
A video blogging site. YouTube has 1 billion unique monthly users and as of November 2016, YouTube surpassed Facebook as the social network with the farthest reach in the UK. Every minute, 2 million videos are viewed. In the US, YouTube reaches a bigger audience than some television networks.

## Who uses it?

Users are predominantly male rather than female. The age range is 18 to 49.

## ▶ Best types of posts

Videos...about absolutely anything. From music videos to funny clips, staged and directed or raw and unedited, short or long, covering any topic.



# LinkedIn

## What is it?

A professional network for business connections.

## Who uses it?

Businesses, professionals, employers, employees and job-seekers. Users are fairly evenly split in terms of gender but there are slightly more men than women. LinkedIn users are typically slightly less likely to use other social networks.



## Best types of posts

Longer-reads with graphics and photos – but videos work less well. Focus on work-related, professional content rather than personal.



# Glossary of terms

These are some terms and phrases you'll come across if you use social media.

**Platform or channel** – this is another name for a social media site.

**Content, post or update** – this is something you've written or a picture or video that you've added to your profile or page.

**Follower** – this is someone who has opted to get updates from you.

**Follow** – this is when you choose to get updates from somebody else's social media.

**GIF** – A GIF is a format of image but nowadays, animated GIFs are one of the most common image formats online. You can find GIFs to use on websites such as Giphy.

**Hashtag** – this is a way of connecting your content to a topic and making it easy for people to find it even if they don't follow you. For example **#Buckinghamshire #community** or **#localgovernment**. It can also be a useful way to quickly see what people are saying about that topic.

**Like on Facebook** – this is done by clicking a 'like' button on Facebook which is the thumbs up image usually found under a post, a picture or a video. You are telling people that you like or agree with what you've read, seen or watched.

**Like on Twitter** – this is the action when you click the 'heart' button on Twitter. It allows you to refer back to a particular tweet later. Other people can see what you've 'liked' too.

**Meme** – Memes tend to be static images that make a humorous topical or pop culture reference.

**Share** – by sharing, you allow your followers to see something you've seen and think is worth them seeing too.

**Retweet or RT** – this is the act of sharing something you've seen to your Twitter followers.

**Stream or timeline** – this is the list of updates that you receive from people you follow.

**Selfie** – a picture of yourself taken by yourself, or if it's a group shot, taken by one of the other subjects in the picture.



## General social media tips

- Be human
- Show your personality
- Talk about where you are and what you're doing and share interesting stories
- Post regularly – weekly updates of your activities as a councillor, updates on policies and actions of interest to your community are a good place to start
- Posting about issues which you would like feedback on and notices of events and public meetings are also good
- Make it easy for people to find you online by mentioning your location frequently which will then be picked up in searches
- You may also want to include your social media details in your email signature
- Avoid posting when incapacitated or otherwise tired and emotional
- Don't argue with someone who is argumentative; some people like to row online for the sake of it
- Respect other people's privacy – don't share things online without their permission
- Don't feel you have to answer all times of the day
- It's a two-way conversation so don't just broadcast messages
- Respond to comments and have conversations with people – but be aware that everyone can see the conversation

- Check all posts for spelling, grammar and typos. Look up Donald Trump's 'covfefe' gaffe for inspiration.
- Keep your communications clear, positive, polite and professional
- Share photos, videos and other media as appropriate. Posts with media content tend to work better than words alone as people respond well to photos and videos
- Consider whether to have separate personal and professional accounts but be aware that the lines can be blurred and unless your personal account is private, it's unlikely to be thought of as separate

- Everything online is potentially permanent – even if you delete a post immediately, someone could have taken a screen shot
- Watch and learn from other councillors who are using social media
- Enjoy it!



## Personal safety and security

Check your privacy settings so that you understand who can see what you publish and who can view your personal information.

Be aware that anyone who knows your name or username can search for you online so make sure you are happy with what people can see when they find you. Facebook, Instagram and Twitter all offer clear advice on their sites.

Minimise security risks by using strong passwords for social media accounts and changing them regularly. Protect your devices with a pin to restrict access and prevent misuse. Be mindful that some social media sites are sometimes used to distribute malicious software or code.

Don't let anyone else access your social media accounts.

If you have your location settings switched on for your phone or computer, be aware that posting on social media will mean anyone in the world can see where you are. You might prefer to save photos and publish them online later rather than 'live' if you don't want to broadcast your whereabouts.

You may wish to state that your account is not monitored 24/7, so that people don't expect an instant response from you and anyone seeking urgent help can be signposted elsewhere.

Trolls - Trolling is a form of bullying where people abuse and aggressively poke fun at an individual or an organisation. The likelihood is that this won't happen, but if it does the best response is to ignore them. The internet phrase is 'do not feed the troll.' Trolls love attention and they hate being ignored. So ignore them.

Spam / viruses - Being hacked is quite rare and there are ways you can protect yourself. As with email, if you are sent a link and it looks suspect don't open it. Just delete it. Change your password on a regular basis and don't tick the 'remember me' box when you are using a public computer.

Law

See the Buckinghamshire Council Social Media Policy for more information about how to avoid getting into trouble with the law when using social media.



# Facebook tips

There are numerous ways you can use Facebook in your role as a Member – chose what works best for you.



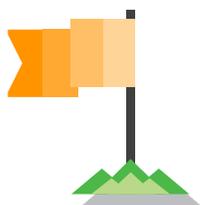
## A Facebook account

You will need an account in order to use Facebook. This is your own profile with your name and details. Go to Facebook.com and click 'sign up' to start.

Anyone can see what you post, even people not signed up to Facebook, until you change the privacy settings.

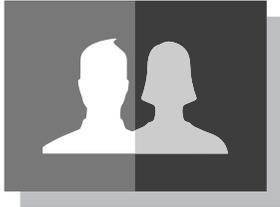
When you change your privacy settings you can control who can see what on your account.

People will request to be your Facebook friend and if you accept them, they will be able to see your restricted content and you will be able to see theirs.



## A Facebook Page

A page is for a business, organisation or individual who wants to connect more widely across Facebook. Anyone can see what you post on a page and people can 'like' and then follow what you post.



## A Facebook Group

A place where like-minded people can meet and chat, for example a community group for village residents or an action group for members of a campaign. If you set one up you can make a group open or closed and decide who becomes a member.

You can set up a Facebook account and then create pages and groups. Or you may prefer just to use your account and not have a page or group.

Videos work well on Facebook, especially live videos. People spend three times longer watching a live video than they do a recorded video.

You can edit Facebook posts as many times as you want.

The 'lifespan' of a typical Facebook post is less than three hours. This means you will get the majority of your reaction to the post within the first three hours.

For regular use of your Facebook page, posting three or four times a week is a good level to aim for, but do whatever feels best for you. You might find that you want to post a couple of times a day, or less often.

## Twitter tips

Get started by setting up an account – visit [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com) and click 'sign up'. Twitter will take you through a step by step guide to the process.

Make sure you upload a profile picture – accounts with no photo tend to look like spam or untrustworthy.

Start by following people; friends, celebrities, news sources and anyone whose tweets you enjoy. When you follow people on Twitter, their tweets instantly show up in your timeline.

Similarly, your tweets will show up in the timelines of people who follow you.

Tweets have a limit of 280 characters. If you want to post more than one Tweet and link them together, you can do this by 'replying' to your original tweet. This will then show up as a 'thread'.

You can't edit Tweets. If you make a mistake, you can either delete it and re-post, or admit your mistake.

Your tweets have a higher chance of being retweeted if you ask for them to be, by writing 'please retweet' or 'please share'.

To start a conversation with another person or organisation, use their Twitter name or handle – such as @BucksCouncil.

You can include the handle anywhere in the tweet. If you start a tweet with the Twitter handle, only the account or accounts you are addressing will normally see the tweet in their timeline, but it will still be public.

Share interesting and relevant tweets you may have seen. For example, posts from a local charity or news that is relevant to your followers.

A hashtag is a word or phrase that starts with the # symbol. It can be a way to connect you to a conversation around an issue, place or event being discussed online. When you click on a hashtag it allows you to search all tweets that are contributing to the discussion.

It's not entirely necessary to use a 'hashtag' any more, as Twitter automatically picks up words and phrases and groups them together. However, it's still the best way to join a conversation and many people use them for style.

