Using Social Media

No two Neighbourhood Watch schemes are the same nor communicate among themselves in the same way.  Some groups hold regular face-to-face meetings, others converse almost entirely by email, and some use social media platforms to post messages and share information. A few groups even have their own smartphone apps.

No one way is right or wrong, it depends entirely on what suits the members of your scheme.  But if you haven’t ever considered the possibility of using social media to communicate with your group members, it could be worth exploring.  Social media is free, convenient, instant, and surprisingly easy to use – most social media platforms are very intuitive and provide clear instructions for setting up pages or groups.  It’s up to you whether to make your messages completely public, so that anybody can read them, or only accessible to a select group of people.  You can add images or videos, invite comments and start conversations, and connect with other like-minded people and groups if you want to.  Social media can be fun! People are naturally social creatures so it’s satisfying to see comments and likes on your posts.

As well as providing you with a quick and easy way of communicating among your scheme members, social media offers real-time news and information discovery – a real bonus for spreading the word about things going on in your neighbourhood in a timely fashion.

Having a social media account lets people know that your Neighbourhood Watch scheme is an active and important part of their world. And, having an active account has been shown to generate loyalty among your members – it’s another tool to help ensure your Neighbourhood Watch scheme is a success.

To support groups in using social media we have created '[Social Media Guidelines for Neighbourhood Watch Groups](https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2020-06/Social%20media%20guidelines%20for%20Neighbourhood%20Watch%20groups%20v3.pdf)' as well as 'How to Guides' for [Facebook](https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2020-01/How%20to%20use%20Facebook.pdf), [Twitter](https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2020-01/HowToSetUpNWTwitterAccount.pdf) and [WhatsApp](https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2021-07/HowToSetUpNWWhatsAppAccount_0.pdf). Our social media guidelines are aligned to our six core values of being neighbourly, community focused, inclusive, proactive, trusted, and collaborative.

Our 'How to Guides' will show you how to set up pages or groups and how to administer these to best-practice guidelines.  It will also offer some advice on how to monitor engagement, so that you can track what works and what doesn’t. The guides focus on three of the most popular social media platforms – Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp. All of these enable you to communicate online with others, either with a whole group of people or with just one person at a time, but they all operate in slightly different ways.

The images in these step-by-step guides are a mix of desktop computer images, for Facebook and Twitter, and iPhone images for Whatsapp.  We recommend setting up your Twitter and Facebook Page or Group on a desktop computer, as the view is wider, and you can see all the functions more easily.  It is possible to set up all of these on a tablet or mobile, but what you see will be laid out for a smaller screen and you won’t be able to see all the available options as easily. WhatsApp is a mobile app and so it should be set up and used on a mobile phone.  Although we have used an Apple iPhone, the links and functions should all be in the same place on an Android phone and should look very similar.

If something doesn’t make sense while you’re following these guides, or you have a question that isn’t answered here, the best thing to do is simply to Google your problem.  The internet is a great resource and should provide you with the answer to any question about using these social media platforms. If that fails, do contact us and we will be able to help.

All downloads are available see additional articles added.