



MARPLE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A guide for committee and members on using social media to promote the work of Marple Local History Society and in a personal capacity.

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year.

Marple Local History Society will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

Prepared for the society by M. Whittaker.

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Introduction

What is social media?

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video content), and network with others through the sharing of information, opinion, knowledge and common interests.

Examples of social media include Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn and Instagram.

Why do we use social media?

Social media is a useful new tool to aid the successful communication of the activities and aims of Marple Local History Society. It is important for the society to participate in social media in order to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of the work of the society.

Why do we need a social media policy?

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if discussing issues relating to Marple Local History Society's activities. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, that we require everyone to observe when representing the society. Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for all trustees, committee members and ordinary members representing the society, and applies to content posted via a Marple Local History Society device or a personally owned device.

Before engaging in society-related social media activity, members must read this policy.

Setting out the social media policy

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of Marple Local History Society's activities, and the use of social media by members in both a professional and personal capacity. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help members support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

Point of contact for social media

Our trustees have nominated members Mark Whittaker and Martin Cruickshank as Admins to be responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, speak to an Admin. At the present time no other members can post content directly on Marple Local History Society's official channels, although they can comment on posts.

Which social media channels do we use?

Marple Local History Society uses the following social media channels:

Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/marplelocalhistorysociety (not yet set up).

Marple Local History Society has this Facebook Page for the purposes of sharing news of the society's aims and activities. The aims (charitable objects) of the society are TO DEVELOP AND FOSTER AN INTEREST IN THE APPRECIATION OF THE HISTORY OF MARPLE AND THE SURROUNDING AREA.

The aim will be to bring the society's activities to a wider audience and this will be achieved by posting news and details on the society's own channel(s) of our meetings, trips, walks, newsletters, articles published on our web site and records added to our online archives.

The society's posts will be shared on suitable Facebook Community Groups – such as Marple Community Hub, Marple Memories and suitable local pages such as The Marple Website and Marple People.

Guidelines

Using Marple Local History Society's social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. The nominated Admins are responsible for setting up and managing Marple Local History Society's social media channels. Only nominated Admins will have the access to post using these accounts.
2. Be an ambassador for our brand. Admins should ensure they reflect the society's values in what they post and use our tone of voice. Our brand guidelines set out our tone of voice that all Admins should refer to when posting content on Marple Local History Society's social media channels.
3. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for Marple Local History Society, and accurately reflects the society's agreed position.
4. Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them.
5. Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images.
7. Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.
8. If members outside of the Admin Team wish to contribute content for social media, they should speak to the Admins about this.
9. Always check facts. Admins should not automatically assume that material is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation.
10. Be honest. Say what you know to be true or have a good source for. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.
11. Admins should refrain from offering personal opinions via Marple Local History Society's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about the society's position on a particular issue, please speak to the committee.
12. It is vital that the society does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.
14. Admins should not encourage people to break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material.
15. Members should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of Marple Local History Society. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, the Admins can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.
16. Marple Local History Society is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We have every right to express views on policy, including the policies of parties, but we can't tell people how to vote.
17. If a complaint is made on the society's social media channels, Admins should seek advice from the committee before responding. If they are not available, then Admins should speak to the Chairman.
18. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the charity's reputation. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity.

The Admins will regularly monitor our social media spaces for mentions of the society so we can catch any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis situation, the Admins will consult with the committee or the Chairman.

If any members outside of the Admins become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on the society's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the Admins immediately.

Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflicts might arise. Marple Local History Society members are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with the society's values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive the society. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the society. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about the society's activities, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent Marple Local History Society's positions, policies or opinions."
2. Members who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they are a member of the society should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the committee and the Admins.
3. Those on the committee or in specialist roles where they are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing society's view.
4. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with Marple Local History Society and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the general public, fellow members and the local community.
5. If a member is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to the society, they should talk to the committee immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.
8. Marple Local History Society is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing the society Admins are expected to hold the society's position of neutrality. Those who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from the society, and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.
9. Never use Marple Local History Society's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the committee.
10. Always protect yourself and the charity. Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully. When you are using social media sites, it is important that you do so safely.
11. Think about your reputation as well as the charity's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be polite and the first to correct your own mistakes.
12. We encourage members to share tweets and posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support the society and our activities. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage members to do this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the Admins who will respond as appropriate.

Further guidelines

Libel

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether Admins are posting content on social media as part of their role or in a personal capacity, they should not bring the society into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright law

It is critical that Admins and members abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

Confidentiality

Any communications that Admins or members make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that the society is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date.

Discrimination and harassment

Admins should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official society social media channel or a personal account. For example:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- using social media to bully another individual
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content

Lobbying Act

Charities are legally allowed to campaign to bring about a change in policy or law to further their organisational purpose. In most cases, spending on charity campaigns that are in accordance with charity law will not be regulated under electoral law. However, the Lobbying Act, which was passed in January 2014, states that during national elections (known as regulated periods) spending on campaigning activities may be regulated.

Charities which spend more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, during the regulated period, need to register with the Electoral Commission. To abide by the Lobbying Act, campaigning activities on social media must not be seen as intending to influence people's voting choice. During these periods, all campaigning activity will be reviewed by the Chairman.

Protection and intervention

The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. For example, Facebook. However, if a member considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the Chairman immediately.

Under 18s and vulnerable people

Young and vulnerable people face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18-years-old via social media, members should ensure the online relationship with Marple Local History Society follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Admins should ensure that young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online, and given guidance on security/privacy settings as necessary. Admins should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the young person and society content and other content is appropriate for them.

Responsibilities and breach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of Marple Local History Society is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. Members who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Admins, committee or Chairman.