

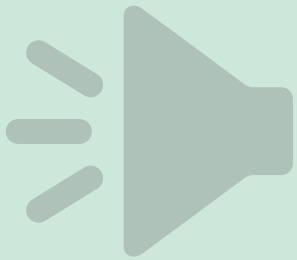


Toolkit for action

Using social media

"What is interesting is the power and the impact of social media ... So we must try to use social media in a good way."

— Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Prize laureate



Why social media matters

Social media is a powerful tool. Like a knife, it can be used well – to prepare food, for instance – or badly – to hurt someone. Words, images and attention are the currency of social media, and these things can change the world. It's important to get to grips with using these free online networks so that you may harness that power for your cause. From a campaigning point of view, while there are risks that come with using social media, it is counterproductive not to use these tools. This is especially true if media outlets are not yet covering the project or issue you hope to highlight.



People use social media for different things, and it's important to be open-minded about how others choose to use their platforms. Some social media platforms are designed to help people connect with friends and family (Facebook profiles, WhatsApp) and others for public commentary (Twitter, Facebook pages). By sharing social justice stories, you are adding a voice to the broad stream of conversation on a particular platform. Your messages and actions add a distinct flavour; some will like it, others will not, but they become part of a conversation that has global potential.

This guide gives you a grounding in how to use freely available online communication networks. This should

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make it easier for people to learn about your campaign actions, and to spread your messages beyond your own immediate social circles.

The term 'social media' refers to any website or mobile phone app that enables people to share information with others in a way that encourages further interaction. This includes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, WhatsApp and Snapchat. In this guide we will look at three key options for campaign communications: Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp.

A beginner's guide to...Twitter

The basics

Twitter is a platform for interacting with a community of 'followers' via tweets. A tweet is simply a message box that allows you to write text, share links and publish photos or videos. Tweets can be a maximum of 280 characters.



Twitter is an effective tool for:

- sharing key messages, information about your campaign, and news relating to it
- live tweeting – reporting developments as they happen
- starting conversations and becoming part of a public dialogue
- directly and/or publicly addressing decisionmakers and organisations.

Choose a username – known on Twitter as a 'handle' – that reflects your campaign aim. For example, @BoycottWorkfare is an effective campaign group Twitter handle.

Upload pictures. You need a small profile picture, either of yourself or your group's logo, and a larger, high resolution background image. A good background image might be a picture from your last action, or whatever it is you are trying to protect or achieve – for example, the local landscape.

Write a short bio. This might sum up your campaign aim and who you are, and feature your chosen hashtag.

Following relevant tweeters keeps your news feed focused on your campaign issue and enables you to spot opportunities. For example, when a minister tweets that they will talk about your issue on the BBC Radio 4 Today programme, you can post your message on the #r4today hashtag when they appear.

Try following:

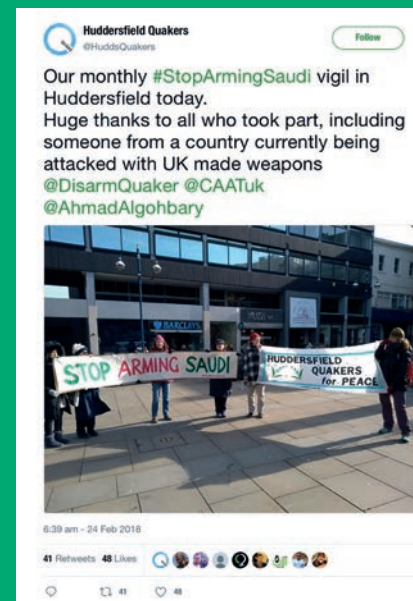
- journalists who cover the issue you are focusing on
- politicians who may support or work on your campaign issue
- allies – other faith or campaign organisations taking action on this issue.



Twitter tends to work well when you post small updates two or three times a day. You can tweet more than this – for example if you get into a conversation, or are livetweeting an event – or less. Tweeting relevant news as and when you hear it is good Twitter practice.

What makes a good tweet?

A good campaign tweet tends to include at least two things: a brief call to action (see left) or a brief piece of news that tells a story about your work. This could include a clear, compelling photo or brief video that brings your campaign message to life. Tweets with photos and videos get more engagement than text-only tweets.



Using #hashtags

A hashtag transforms text into a link on Twitter. Using a hashtag connects your tweet to a news feed featuring the same hashtag. People use hashtags to find each other, follow what's happening around a particular topic, and find new accounts to follow. You can create a new hashtag or use an existing one.

Choosing a hashtag Think about your message. How can you convey it briefly and simply? An example of an effective campaign hashtag is #MeToo, which captured the spirit of solidarity around sexual harassment.

Hashtags always start with the # symbol. This symbol makes text into a URL, connecting up every tweet that contains the same phrase. Aside from capital letters, do not use any punctuation in your hashtag – it will prevent the tag from working.

Write your hashtag on tweets about a particular topic, for example #QuakersForPeace, and then encourage others to do the same. This means that tweets from different accounts can be found in one place. Click on your hashtag to see if anyone is using it. When someone does, retweet it (see overleaf)!

Use a couple of hashtags in one tweet to get it seen by different audiences. For example a #QuakersForPeace tweet could also reach non-Quaker activists by including #nuclearban.

Use existing hashtags to get your tweet to appear in a busy newsfeed. For example, if tonight's BBC Question Time discusses the nuclear ban, tweet the #bbcqt hashtag with your group's stance on the issue. This will be seen by thousands of active Twitter users.

Trending hashtags The UK's hot topics are listed by your main feed, and change throughout the day. Try using them for example, on a Monday, tweet some activist inspiration to #MotivationMonday

Journalists look at hashtag streams about particular stories (e.g. #MeToo) to find comments to feature in their stories. Tweeting a strong message on a breaking news hashtag can result in media coverage.

Talking to other Twitter users

Directly address a person or organisation by typing their handle after the @ symbol. You can use this to send a public tweet to a decisionmaker you are trying to influence. Encourage others to tweet them at the same time, to create a wider pressure for action.

When you reply to someone else's tweet it will be seen by other people interacting with that conversation, but will only appear in your replies tab on your profile. This means you can chat in a conversational way without it being the main feature of your profile page. If you wish to make a conversational tweet visible to your followers and profile visitors, preface your use of their @handle with some text, such as 'Yes, @MPhandle, but fracking damages the climate', or something as simple as a full stop: '@MPhandle...'

Retweeting simply means clicking this symbol to repost someone else's tweet. Doing this means that your followers see the tweet too, in their feeds and on your timeline.



If you're sharing something that you think another organisation might like to retweet, tag them at the end of your post – like so.

This means they will see it in their mentions and can choose to retweet it if it feels relevant to their followers. If you attach an image, you can tag up

to ten other accounts in the picture. If you tag relevant accounts they may retweet you too.

Liking If you click the ♥ symbol below a tweet, this will save the tweet in your Likes. This is useful for storing tweets to refer back to; it also means

that the tweet you like will appear in your followers' feeds, but not your profile timeline. Liking a tweet is also a simple way to show appreciation or agreement. It will appear in other people's timelines like so.



The basics

Facebook allows people to share their thoughts, pictures and videos with those in their network, and potentially beyond. When people react to your posts by liking, commenting or sharing them, your content gets seen by their own friends and families.



Facebook is an effective tool for:

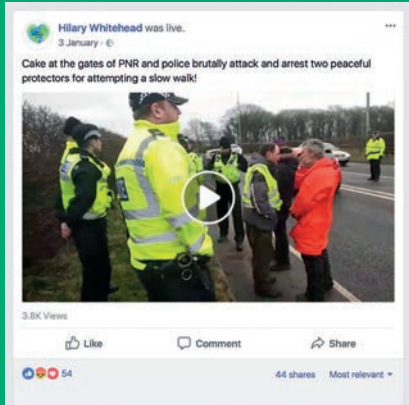
- organising and promoting actions and other events
- sharing news, updates and images
- starting conversations or gathering ideas
- creating an online presence or forum for a group, campaign or project.

What makes a good Facebook post?

Post no more than a couple of times a day on Facebook; more is overkill. Focus on quality over quantity. You want to share links, photos, or videos that are meaningful and tap into how people feel about an issue. People who use Facebook tend to see more of posts that do one of the following three things:

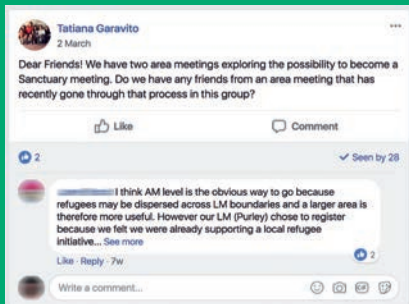
1. feature a clear, compelling image with a caption (left)





2. include video footage, whether it's shared from another Page, uploaded directly from your phone, or through Facebook Live's streaming function, as below left

3. ask a question. Facebook is great for gathering recommendations and suggestions, and your followers will have the opportunity to learn from each other in the comments.



Four key Facebook functions

Facebook profiles

Setting up a profile enables you to set up pages and groups, write posts that friends and family can view, and comment on other people's posts. You do not need to provide your real name and photos to use the profiles function, but doing so will lend you much more credibility among those you wish to influence. Anything you do not wish to be linked to your name for legal reasons – for example, if you are taking an arrestable action – shouldn't appear on Facebook. Uploading just one profile picture of yourself is friendly; a picture of a campaign slogan tends to be offputting.

Facebook Pages

The Page function is a great way to formalise your campaign group's online presence. You can set up a Page to advertise your group, share your messages and demands, and publish news and events of direct relevance to your cause.

Anyone may Like your page, comment on your posts, and view your images. This makes it a key platform for publicising your actions, before and after they happen.

Putting links to your Page on flyers and press releases increases your chances of getting media coverage.

If someone who disagrees with your position on an issue comments on your posts, this is an opportunity

to draw them to your point of view or affirm your message. Thank them for their comment, and draw them out with a question so you can better understand them.

You can 'boost' key posts by paying to advertise them to people who may agree with your position but not be aware that anyone is taking action in your area.

You can manage more than one Page on Facebook at a time – handy if you are active on a couple of issues.

Facebook groups

These are forums for discussion and sharing information. There are three types:

- **Public groups** Content posted in these groups can be seen by any Facebook user
- **Closed groups** Content posted here is not visible except to members. Any Facebook user may search for a closed group and request access; the group administrator can accept or reject this request. Contents cannot be directly shared out of the group.
- **Secret groups** These are invite-only. They cannot be found via search, do not appear in people's group lists, and the contents – including events – cannot be shared by members.

Campaign groups will most likely find the Closed setting useful. A group can be used as a forum for

close supporters to discuss plans, articles and ideas. WhatsApp can then be used for fine-tuning logistical details and real-time updates when people are away from their computers.

Facebook events

'Events' is an easy-to-use and popular function on Facebook – many people use Facebook just to access it. You can set up an event through your profile, your Page, or through your Group.

Be clear about what attendees can expect from your event. If you are planning to bring snacks, say so. If children are welcome, say so! If you have pictures from your last event, post them in the Event Discussion! Providing friendly, detailed information in the weeks and days before the event helps ease any social anxiety your attendees might feel, makes it clear that things have been thought through, and keeps the date fresh in people's minds. One caveat: if you plan an arrestable offence, do not mention that on Facebook.

Get help using Facebook at: www.facebook.com/help.

A beginner's guide to...WhatsApp



The basics

WhatsApp is a free group chat system that makes it easy to have a text conversation with a group of people. WhatsApp is primarily mobile-based and, like Facebook and Twitter, needs internet access.

WhatsApp is an effective tool for...

- keeping your group up to date with practical info, for example, 'We're waiting at the station'
- sharing private action updates with group members as they happen, for example, 'Jo has been arrested for obstructing a highway'
- sharing videos and photos taken on mobile devices across your group members, for example, 'Please post this picture of Jo obstructing the highway on Twitter'

Visit www.whatsapp.com/download through your mobile phone to download the correct version for your device.

Good WhatsApp etiquette

Adding people Groups can be small – two or three members – or large. For example thousands of cab drivers in London use a WhatsApp group to keep in touch, like a self-organised intranet. Add people to your group if they ask to join or agree to be added when you suggest it to them. You add someone to

a WhatsApp group chat using their mobile number, which makes that number available to others in the group. Members can opt to leave at any time.

Stay on message Be clear about the purpose of your group. Is it for organising a particular event? Or for sharing day-to-day updates? Both are excellent uses of WhatsApp, but you need to choose one or the other to avoid confusion. State the group's purpose when you start the group and when you tell potential new members about it. Then, if someone posts off-topic updates, it's okay to gently remind everyone what the group is for.

Get chatting Unlike Facebook and Twitter, Whatsapp is designed for sharing messages, links and pictures in a conversational stream, so you can post as much or as little as you like on any given day. The in-app notification settings allow you to control how much your phone pings when you get a new message!

Auto-storage WhatsApp automatically saves photos and videos that people send you to your phone. This can be very helpful – for example, if you are the person tasked with posting a video of an action on Twitter. If your phone has limited storage, however, this facility can be switched off in the app settings.

Get help with using WhatsApp at: faq.whatsapp.com/en.

Keeping your data secure



On Twitter

Twitter retains access to the photos, contact details and tweets linked to your account. Your tweets will only make an impact if they are public, so campaigners are best off avoiding the optional privacy settings.

On Facebook

Your personal profile is automatically set to be publicly available, and you use the Settings tab to change this. You can opt to keep almost everything on your profile private, while setting campaign posts to 'public'. This means that others can share your message. After all, the ideal campaign post is one that goes viral.

It's worth spending ten minutes adjusting your privacy settings to a level that suits you. Avoid registering for apps that require access to your Facebook information, except Facebook-owned companies such as Instagram. Facebook retains access to information you post while your account is active; you can request a deletion if you wish to remove all data – including campaign info.

On Whatsapp

Your chat messages are private and can only be viewed by those in the group. If a group member screenshots your conversation and shares it elsewhere, then that portion of the conversation will be public. If in doubt, talk to group members about privacy.

Tell stories to be heard



“Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.”

George Fox, 1656
Quaker faith & practice

Whatever platform you use online, what you say, see and share is what keeps people listening to you. Stories of obstacles overcome, silences broken, and justice being served have huge power. When you share a story online, it might touch someone you'll never meet, or change the life of an acquaintance you rarely see. Equally, you might hear from people who may never agree with you.

All of these things are part of what makes social media engaging. Share event information and updates, yes – but share stories too. Who is affected by your issue? What stories can they tell? People are interested in other people. It will be people who draw others to your cause. Remember to share news about the things you do with an aim of that inspiring, or challenging, others.

The flipside to this is that these amazing things are also data, and that data is used to sell things to people and build court cases. Get permission before using photos and names, and never plan arrestable actions on Twitter or Facebook.

The great thing about social media is that you get to write the story – so make sure that the stories you share are the ones you want to be told, and told again.

About this guide

This is one of the toolkits for action available from the Economics, Sustainability & Peace Team in QPSW. It was written by Suki Ferguson (sukif@quaker.org.uk). Published May 2018.

Follow Quakers online

Facebook: @faithinactionquaker

Instagram: @britishquakers

Twitter: @britishquakers

Web: www.quaker.org.uk/our-work

Large print versions of all Britain Yearly Meeting publications are available on request from publications@quaker.org.uk.

About Quakers

Quakers share a way of life, not a set of beliefs. Their unity is based on shared understanding and a shared practice of silent worship, where they seek a communal stillness.

Quakers seek to experience God directly, within themselves and in their relationships with others and the world around them. They meet together for worship in local meetings, which are open to all who wish to attend.

Quakers try to live with honesty and integrity. This means speaking truth to all, including people in positions of power. The Quaker commitment to peace arises from the conviction that love is at the heart of existence and that all human beings are unique and equal.

This leads Quakers to put their faith into action by working locally and globally to change the systems that cause injustice and violent conflict.

