

Welsh Beekeepers' Association

Cymdeithas Gwenynwyr Cymru

Registered Charity number 509929



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A guide for trustees, officers and other volunteers on using social media to promote the work of WBKA and in a personal capacity

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. WBKA will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

Date of last review: November 2023

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), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating WBKA's work. It is important for volunteers to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of WBKA's work.

Why do we need a social media policy?

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe. 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 *volunteers and trustees* and applies to content posted on both a *WBKA* device and a personal device. Before engaging in *WBKA* related social media activity, volunteers 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 *WBKA*, and the use of social media 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 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 and officers are 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 a trustee.

Which social media channels do we use?

WBKA currently uses:

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/WelshBeekeepersAssociation>

Twitter <https://twitter.com/welshbee>

These platforms are used to promote events and to post messages and items of interest to beekeepers in (and beyond) Wales.

We may use other platforms *going forward (and this policy will be updated as and when those social media channels go live)*.

Guidelines

Using WBKAs social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. Trustees and/or officers are responsible for setting up and managing WBKA's social media channels. Admins may be added to support the trustees and officers if and as required.
2. All trustees and officers are volunteers and social media is monitored as frequently as possible so as to respond to comments and direct messages, where responses are required.
3. Trustees, officers and any other volunteers should ensure they reflect WBKA values in what and how they post, using clear, concise and courteous language at all times.
4. Make sure that all social media content is relevant to WBKA and its members, and, where appropriate, accurately reflects WBKA's agreed position.
5. Bring value to our audience. Answer their questions, help and engage with them.
6. 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 sharing information and content (which is subject to the appropriate sharing permissions), this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from WBKA. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, we must ensure we have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.
9. Always check facts. Do not automatically assume that material is accurate and 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. Refrain from offering personal opinions via WBKA's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about WBKA's position on a particular issue, please speak to a trustee.
12. It is vital that WBKA does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, if sharing a video of a swarm retrieval, it may be necessary to reference relevant health & safety advice/guidance.
13. We must 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.
14. Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels, should not be set up on behalf of WBKA without the knowledge and input of the trustees.
15. WBKA 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.
16. If a complaint is made on WBKA's social media channels, advice should be sought from the trustees before responding.
17. 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.
18. The trustees regularly monitor social media spaces for mentions of WBKA so we can provide any clarification needed, or correct any misinformation, promptly.

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. WBKA volunteers are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with WBKA's values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive WBKA. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of WBKA. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about WBKA's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent WBKA's positions, policies or opinions."
2. Volunteers should be mindful of any potential conflicts of interest when using a personal blog or website which indicates that they have a connection with WBKA.
3. Those who are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing WBKA's view.
4. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with WBKA and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to WBKA stakeholders and the public generally.
5. If you are contacted by the press about social media posts that relate to WBKA, talk to a trustee immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.
6. WBKA 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 WBKA, volunteers are expected to hold WBKA's position of neutrality, or comment on relevant issues in line with WBKA policy. Those who are politically active need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from WBKA, and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.
7. Never use WBKA's logos or branding unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the trustees.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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 WBKA and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage you to do this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile.

Summary

Social Media, in all its forms, affords WBKA an opportunity to communicate with its members and others spontaneously and digitally. This type of communication can form an effective part of a wider range of communication methods, including more traditional ones.

Social Media is increasingly used and relied on by many as a primary source of information and it is therefore a powerful engagement tool.

As with any form of communication, it should be used with courtesy and common sense. "If you wouldn't want to publish something on the front page of a newspaper, then don't put it on social media" is probably as good a rule of thumb to follow as any!