



Social media guidelines for Neighbourhood Watch groups

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Social media is a great communication and engagement tool for Neighbourhood Watch groups to use. It can be used to increase awareness of Neighbourhood Watch locally, reach and connect a wider audience, promote Neighbourhood Watch as a means to tackle crime and build community cohesion, and so much more.

Because social media is instant, it can be a very useful crime prevention tool, sharing information and guidance in a timely manner. It can be used spread the word about Neighbourhood Watch events and personnel changes, communicate recent crime information in the area, alert residents to personnel changes of local police/ community safety teams, provide warnings about new types of scams and reminders on how to report scams.

In terms of increasing community cohesion, social media is a great tool in emergency response situations (e.g., COVID-19, flooding), and arranging events in the area such as street clean ups, street parties, community lunches or book hides.

It is vital when representing Neighbourhood Watch on social media that we aspire to achieve our vision and mission, and all posts are aligned with our core values. We never use discriminatory or derogatory language, and instead use a positive and approachable tone.

Vision: At Neighbourhood Watch our vision is a society where neighbours come together to create safer, stronger, and active communities.

Mission: Our mission is to support and enable individuals and communities to be connected, active and safe, which increases wellbeing and minimises crime.

Values: Below are some guidelines in how our social media posts can align to our six core values of being neighbourly, community focused, inclusive, proactive, trusted, and collaborative.

Be neighbourly: we aspire to be good neighbours.

- Use positive and friendly language – do not make light of serious messages, but do use clear calls to action, to show how people can take positive action to make a change
- Use emojis to bring a light-hearted tone to messages, and break up longer paragraphs into 'bullet points'
- Never swear or use discriminatory or derogatory language

Community focused: we bring people together.

- Tag people, themes, and companies relevant to developing your community
- Include relevant images or videos within your posts to grab the attention of residents
- Inspire people with simple actions to show those who want to know how to get involved
- Share positive, inspirational stories which highlight how people are making a difference
- Think about your audience and the types of posts they will be interested in reading

Inclusive: we are welcoming to all people.

- Never use, promote or share hate speech of any form

- Do not post, reshare or promote any demeaning comments about race, gender, religion, culture, sexual orientation, or identity
- Use clear language to support those of all abilities to understand your post
- Use humour wisely. One person's joke is another's shockingly bad taste. Always err on the side of caution before posting something that might be offensive to others. If unsure, test it out on family or friends before posting
- Be kind and respectful of other's views, even if you disagree with them.
- Remain politically neutral in representing Neighbourhood Watch. We are community focussed but not political.

Proactive: we are active within communities, and we are relevant in today's world.

- Share webpages to direct people to the useful information, such as our burglary prevention checklist: <https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/get-involved/help-and-advice/crimepreventiontoolkits/burglaries/burglary-prevention-checklist>
- Keep things interesting by sharing relevant news articles and crime prevention campaigns

Trusted: we are dependable, caring, respectable, approachable, and supportive.

- Check your account regularly and respond in a timely manner to build trust
- Use our logo for your profile picture to let followers know you are a registered group
- Do not share CCTV images – there are strict rules and laws around this
- Do not use photos of other NW members or members of the public without their active consent

Collaborative: we work as a team, in partnerships and within communities.

- Tag our central Neighbourhood Watch account in your posts: @N_Watch
- Use the hashtags and social media campaign assets shared by the Head of Communications and Digital, Ruby Smart, if appropriate
- Share partners posts such as those from the Police, and other crime prevention organisations
- Vary the time of day you post to see how your audiences engage with you
- Do not advertise businesses (unless from a partner), self-promotions or spam
- Engage with your audience. Share or add to the messages that other people are already posting. Social media is all about conversations so dive in and take part!

If you are ever in doubt, or want a second opinion when it comes to social media, please feel free to contact our Head of Communications and Digital, Ruby Smart: ruby.smart@ourwatch.org.uk.