

Bat Conservation Trust



Social Media; reaching new supporters online

1. Facebook
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Facebook

Your group should harness ‘people power’. Set up a business Facebook account

Why post? Always be clear why you are posting:

- Awareness raising: of bats, the existence of your group and what you do,
- Forums for help, advice and information sharing,
- Fundraising asks,
- To drive people to your website.

What does well? Variety such as; interesting reads, pictures, videos, sharing of other posts with relevant info/images, asks, caption competitions, adverts for offers.

- News articles – these tend to be shared more and are a great way to increase reach, gain new followers and initiate discussions on your page,
- Images - a great way to grab attention. Ensure your images have both a copyright credit and your organisation’s logo on them; any shares or subsequent posts will increase awareness of your organisation as a result of this,
- BCT operate under a gloved hand policy- no bare hand pictures with bats are posted. Gloved hands policy is also applied to all BCT’s posts on FB and Twitter – no bare hands pix to be posted by us (or shared if they’re posted by others) this might be something you would also do,
- Images of children- ensure verifiable permissions have been obtained from parents or guardians before posting any images of children,
- Videos- another popular attention grabber online. If you have a YouTube channel link to that by posting links in your status updates,
- Caption competitions generate fun interaction and a stunning image can get a lot of responses!

- Asks – add a link or an ‘ask’ to even an inconsequential post. It’s good to try and tie it in with a link to your website i.e. find out more [here](#) (with attached link).

What can discourage people?

- Ensure posts are concise. If you include an ask, such as donate/join/find out more, limit it to one per posting,
- Try not to duplicate posts too often, maintain interest with a wide range of posts,
- Commercial offers. Decide in advance where you stand on promoting commercial products/ ventures. It is good to encourage corporate sponsorship or percentage donations in exchange for this kind of exposure. Ensure all administrators of your social media are aware of your position on this.

Posts by others

Be sure to check your pages and inbox regularly. Posts by others will not show up on your main page unless you share them which gives some degree of control. They can however be viewed if looked for, so it is worth checking for any offensive or derogatory comments that may need to be deleted, or posts that need to be passed on to other organisations/ authorities.

Similarly if other groups/ researchers would like posts on your page, ask them to post on your page for you to share. This will avoid confusion with your work and maintain a degree of distance.

It’s good practice to like or comment on people’s posts, say thank you to direct messages to your inbox etc. Engage in a conversation with people who have posted on your Facebook page.

Toptips:

- Message regularly. Followers come to expect posts at certain times and this keeps your organisation in their minds,
- Facebook analytics: use this to your benefit in determining when/ which posts are more likely to get a response,
- Interactivity is a great driver, so engage people and ask them questions.

Twitter

Follow the general rules of Facebook: you are however, limited to 140 characters per tweet (post). Links and attachments use up these characters so it pays to be concise.

Links – if you want to use a link to another webpage it’s advisable to shorten the URL. Some Automated Social Media Management systems (such as Hootsuite) and bitly.com are sites that can help with this.

Using #Hashtags

This is a simple and effective method of making something searchable.

If you use **#bats** on every post about bats you can then search **#bats** on twitter and see everything previously posted with that tag. E.g. ‘We love **#bats** and want help ...’

How does that benefit my organisation? It means anyone on twitter with an interest in the subject can find your posts when they search using the **#bats** hashtag (or any subsequent hashtag you have used).

Trending: when a lot of people are posting/sharing/discussing a subject that is hash tagged, it ‘trends’ so check what’s trending and see if there’s a way you can join in... so if #Halloween is trending be sure to add #Halloween into the tweet about your bats fundraising and party packs etc

Interacting

- Retweeting resends the message of another individual/ organisation so all of your followers can see it,
- You can also follow others that may be of interest to your organisation,
- It is possible to send direct messages to others and vice versa so keep an eye on these,
- Favourite – a bit like a ‘like’ on Facebook.
- Remember a reply will be public! A direct message is not public but Twitter is not a forum for private discussion and if sensitive or private information is to be discussed be sure to contact them directly.

Automated Social Media Management

If your organisation posts often on social media and/or staff are not available to post regularly, Automated Social Media Management systems (such as Hootsuite) have a control panel for social media streams. This allows you to schedule future posts ensuring your organisation is consistent in its social media, and enabling posts/ tweets to go out at times when that may not have been possible i.e. weekends.

There is also no need to shorten URLs as the system does this automatically for you.

Audiences: Your followers on Facebook and Twitter may vary. You may find Twitter encourages more professionals, and so you need to consider this when gathering information for posts.

www.hootsuite.com

www.bitly.com

www.facebook.com/

<https://twitter.com/>

Set up a webpage

Not only does this allow you to provide the general public with information on your organisation and its work, it also increases awareness with a reach that you could not gain elsewhere.

This can be done relatively inexpensively and you can even set up your own website if you can’t afford a designer (<http://www.one.com/en/?gclid=ClrHo--JscACFaNZ2wodjr4Ahg>)

Remember... In the main text on webpages;

- Use whole phrases for google searches rather than abbreviations
- Repeat key messages in short searchable terms
- Technical: put in the key message in the url if possible i.e www.batwalksuk.co.uk
- Landing page must have the relevant links to pages to help visitors navigate your site

General tips and Google analytics

- Write for people and search engines
- Take advantage of people's online time, go to where they are.
- Video increases time on website, think about the content that appears around the video
- Twitter/ Facebook: ask questions at a peak time for your followers. Use your charity name in full.
- Blogs and ebulletins: If you set these up publicise them via Facebook and twitter, that way readers don't have to come to you as the information is provided at their request.
- Blogs need updating regularly or readers will drop away.
- The charity websites and twitter pages provide a platform for supporters to voice their opinions and express their passion.

Good Asks:

- Donate to x,y,z projects (use images explain why you are undertaking the project)
- Volunteer (be specific)
- Fancy running a running marathon for bats? Get sponsored and run on our behalf.
- Share posts/updates with people and organisations who may be interested.
- Thankyou's and extra asks – a nice status update with an extra ask: 'A huge thank you to all who donated, please share link with anyone you think might like to help us too'

Using Google analytics

This can help evaluate how your webpage is being received and what works/ what could be changed. Familiarise yourself with the analysis techniques to improve the overall experience for visitors and followers over time.