



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 a wider audience (including younger members), promote Neighbourhood Watch as a means to tackle crime and build community cohesion, engage current members with actions they can take, increase awareness on safety, signpost people to accurate information, share national Neighbourhood Watch campaigns and messages and those of partner organisations.

Because social media is instant, it can be a very useful crime prevention tool, warning residents in a timely manner and making them more vigilant. It can be used to alert residents to suspicious activity in your neighbourhood, spread the word about Neighbourhood Watch events and personnel changes, communicate on recent crimes in the area and successes in apprehending offenders, 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 we aspire to achieve our vision and mission and all posts are aligned with our core values.

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

- Be polite by using kind words and praise people
- Use emoji's like 😊 👍 🙌 to instantly communicate a feeling to your audience
- Avoid swearing, even if you replace letters with symbols

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 support those who want to know how to get involved
- Share positive, inspirational stories of 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

- Do not use any hate speech
- Do not use any bullying language
- Do not post 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
- Recognise traditions and celebrations across cultures such as Christmas and Ramadan
- 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/crimeprevention-toolkits/burglaries/burglary-prevention-checklist>
- Keep things interesting by sharing relevant news articles and crime prevention campaigns
- For users of multiple platforms consider Lightful or Hoot to help manage accounts

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 around this

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

- Share partners posts such as Police, and other crime prevention organisations
- Vary the time of day you post to see how your audience engages 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