SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A guide to volunteers on using social media to promote the work of Cornhill Community Action and in a personal capacity

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

Date of last review: November 2021

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 content), 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 the charity's work. It is important for some volunteers to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of our work.

Why do we need a social media policy?
The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to our work. 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 device owned by the charity and a personal device. Before engaging in work-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 Cornhill Community Action's projects, and the use of social media by volunteers 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 staff 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
Oliver Wright, trustee, is 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, he can be contacted by email. Volunteers should refrain from posting on official channels, unless this is by prior agreement from the communications lead.

Which social media channels do we use?
Cornhill Community Action uses Facebook and Instagram for the promotion of our work.

Guidelines

Using Cornhill Community Action's social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. Oliver Wright is responsible for setting up and managing social media channels. Only those authorised to do so will have access to these accounts.

2. Social Media channels will be monitored and messages responded to within the hours of 9-5, Monday to Friday. Out of hours communications will, on occasion, be required.

3. Be an ambassador for our charity. Staff should ensure they reflect our values in what they post and use our tone of voice.

4. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for Cornhill Community Action, and accurately reflects our agreed position.

5. Bring value to our audience(s). 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. Trustees or volunteers shouldn't post content about supporters or service users without their express permission. If there is shared information about supporters, service users or third party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from the charity. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, trustees must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media. Consent must be collected by way of a written consent form, which must be stored securely. We must remember we have a responsibility to protect those who choose to support the charity by appearing in our content. This responsibility is paramount.

9. Always check facts. We should not automatically assume that material is accurate and should 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. Trustees should refrain from offering personal opinions via the charity's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about the charity's position on a particular issue, please refer to the board of trustees.

12. It is vital that we do not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt. Risk assessments should be carried out before creating any promotional content. The rolling risk assessment model should be implemented.

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. Trustees and volunteers should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of the charity. This could confuse messaging and charity awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, the board of trustees can ensure consistency and focus on building a strong following.

15. Cornhill Community Action 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 the trust's social media channels, volunteers should seek advice from the board of 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. Examples might include a serious allegation of misconduct made by social media. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity.

The board of trustees regularly monitor our social media spaces for mentions of the charity, so we can catch any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis situation, a crisis management strategy will be enacted.

If any volunteer becomes aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on our social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the Oliver Wright immediately.

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

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive the organisation. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the charity. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about our work, you should consider using a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent CCA's positions, policies or opinions."

2. Those in senior roles where they are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing our view.

3. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with the charity and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the general public, colleagues, partners and funders.

4. If a staff member is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to the charity, they should talk to Oliver Wright immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.

5. We are not a political organisation and do not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing the charity, trustees and volunteers are expected to hold a position of neutrality. Trustees who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from CCA, and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. We encourage volunteers to share posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support CCA and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage volunteers to do

this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the board, who will respond as appropriate.

Further guidelines

Libel
Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether volunteers are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring CCA into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright law
It is critical that all volunteers abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

Confidentiality
Any communications that trustees and volunteers make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that CCA is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date.

Discrimination and harassment
Volunteers should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official social media channel or a personal account. For example:
- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- using social media to bully another individual
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content

Lobbying Act
Charities are legally allowed to campaign to bring about a change in policy or law to further their organisational purpose. In most cases, spending on charity campaigns that are in accordance with charity law will not be regulated under electoral law. However, the Lobbying Act, which was passed in January 2014, states that during national elections (known as regulated periods) spending on campaigning activities may be regulated.

Charities which spend more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, during the regulated period, need to register with the Electoral Commission. To abide by the Lobbying Act, campaigning activities on social media must not be seen as intending to influence people's voting choice.

Protection and intervention
The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. For example, Facebook. However, if a volunteer considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the board immediately.

Responsibilities and breach of policy
Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of CCA is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. Breaches of policy will be discussed as a matter of urgency before the board of trustees, before further action is taken.