

YHACS

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A guide for committee members, volunteers, staff, members and potential members of YHACS

Note that this document sets out the policy to be followed by:

- Members of the YHACS Executive Committee (the charity's trustees)
- Members of any YHACS Sub-Committees
- Individuals acting as volunteers
- Anyone working for YHACS as an employee or in a freelance capacity

This document has been adapted from a template provided by CharityComms. See <https://www.charitycomms.org.uk/social-media-policy-template> for more information.

Approved: 19th November 2022

Date of next review: 19th November 2024

Contents

Introduction	3
What is social media?	3
Why do we use social media?	3
Why do we need a social media policy?.....	3
Setting out the social media policy	3
Point of contact for social media.....	3
Which social media channels do we use?	4
Guidelines	5
Using YHACS social media channels — appropriate conduct	5
Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct.....	7
Further guidelines	9
Libel.....	9
Copyright law.....	9
Confidentiality.....	9
Discrimination and harassment	9
Lobbying Act.....	9
Protection and intervention.....	10
Under 18s and vulnerable people.....	10
Responsibilities and beach of policy.....	10

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 individuals associated with YHACS to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of the work done by YHACS. This will usually be through using the YHACS official accounts but committee members, volunteers, freelancers and staff who use social media or run websites in a personal capacity also need to be aware of their responsibilities when referring to YHACS or its work in their personal postings.

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 are discussing issues relating to YHACS or its work. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require you to observe. Publication and commentary on social media carry similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for all committee members, volunteers, freelancers and any staff who may from time to time be employed by YHACS and applies to content posted via either a YHACS-owned device or a personal device.

Before engaging in YHACS-related social media activity, you 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 the charity's work and covers your 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 you support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting YHACS and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

Point of contact for social media

The YHACS Chair 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, speak to the Chair.

Certain members of the Executive Committee may from time to time have access to and permission to publish material on our social media accounts (these are listed below). No other member can post content on YHACS official channels without the permission of the Chair.

Which social media channels do we use?

YHACS uses the following social media channels:

Outlet	Authorised publishers
yhacs.org.uk	Kevin Trickett/Peter Cooper/David Moss
https://twitter.com/yhacschair	Kevin Trickett
https://www.facebook.com/YHACS-255546134798538	Kevin Trickett (but not currently in use)

Guidelines

Using YHACS social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. The YHACS Executive Committee has overall responsibility for setting up and managing the YHACS social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by the Executive Committee will have access to these accounts.
2. Anyone authorised to update social media accounts can do so at any time. Regard should be had to any news which is time-sensitive or embargoed for publication until a specific time or date and care should be taken to observe such constraints.
3. Be an ambassador for our brand. You should ensure you reflect YHACS values in what you post and use our 'tone of voice' – ie, to be professional and to remain 'on message' at all times.
4. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for the YHACS and accurately reflects the YHACS agreed position. If in doubt, ask. Members of the Executive Committee, as trustees of the charity, have a particular responsibility to ensure that they do not post anything in either a professional or personal capacity that runs counter to the YHACS 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 and ensure that YHACS has copyright approvals to use photos not taken by the person posting the image.
7. Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.
8. If requests are received from members of YHACS or others to contribute content for social media, including non-paid for or paid for advertising, you should speak to the authorised person and/or the Chair about this. Generally speaking, YHACS is happy to promote local businesses and organisations, particularly those which have worked with YHACS or supported our work, but care needs to be taken over the suitability of material and it's alignment with YHACS values and stated positions.
9. You should not post content about supporters or other third-party organisations with a connection to YHACS on your own personal accounts without their express permission or approval from the Chair, particularly if the content could reflect negatively on either the third party or YHACS. If you are sharing information about other third-party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from YHACS. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a person, you must ensure you have the consent of the people involved, or from a parent or guardian if children are featured, before using the material on social media.
10. Always check facts. You 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.
11. 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.

12. You should refrain from offering personal opinions via YHACS social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about the YHACS position on a particular issue, please speak to the Chair or one of YHACS' other officers.

13. It is vital that YHACS does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.

14. You should 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.

15. You should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of YHACS or purporting to be administered by the YHACS. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, YHACS can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.

16. YHACS 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 political parties where they are relevant to our charitable objects, but we cannot tell people how to vote.

17. If a complaint is made about or via any YHACS social media channels, you should seek advice from the Chair before responding. If the Chair is not available, then you should speak to one of the other officers.

18. 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 complaints about specific planning matters and policies on which YHACS has commented. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity.

The Chair regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of YHACS 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, the Chair will report back to the committee.

If you become aware of any comments online that you think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on the YHACS social media channels or elsewhere, you should speak to the Chair 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.

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

2. If you have a personal blog or website which relates in any way to YHACS, you should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the Chair or one of the other officers. Similarly, if you want to start blogging and wish to say that you volunteer or work for YHACS, you should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the Chair.

3. Members of the Executive Committee and any sub-committees, particularly but not exclusively those in specialist roles related to the work of YHACS and/or where they are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing the YHACS' view.

4. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with YHACS and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to our wider membership, the general public, colleagues, partners, stakeholders, and actual and potential funders.

5. YHACS may work with high-profile individuals and organisations including members of parliament, councillors, prominent business people and donors. Please don't approach high profile people from your personal social media accounts to ask them to support the charity, as this could hinder any potential relationships that are being managed by the Chair and/or delegated Executive Committee members. This includes asking for retweets about the charity.

If you have any information about high profile people that have a connection to our cause, or if there is someone who you would like to support the charity, please speak to the Chair to share the details.

7. If you are contacted by the press about your social media posts that relate to YHACS, you should talk to the Chair or other officer immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.

9. Never use YHACS logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the Chair.

10. 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. When you are using social media sites, it is important that you do so safely.

11. 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.

12. We encourage you 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 YHACS 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. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the Chair 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 you are posting content on social media as part of your role or in a personal capacity, you should not bring YHACS into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright law

It is critical that you 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 you make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that YHACS is not ready to disclose yet such as a news story that is embargoed for a particular date. Please refer to the Chair for further information.

Discrimination and harassment

You should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official YHACS 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. During these periods, all campaigning activity will be reviewed by the Chair.

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 you consider that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, you should report this to the Chair immediately.

Under 18s and vulnerable people

Young and vulnerable people face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18-years-old via social media, you should ensure the online relationship with YHACS follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. You should ensure that young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online and that they have been given guidance on security/privacy settings as necessary. You should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the young person and any YHACS content and other content is appropriate for them. Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy.

Responsibilities and breach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of YHACS through our official accounts is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. Breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Please refer to our Membership Policy for further information on disciplinary procedures. If you are unsure about whether something you propose to do on social media might breach this policy, seek advice from the Chair.