

Harrogate District Cycle Action (HDCA) Social Media Policy 7th January 2020 v2

Note 1: To be effective advocates and influencers HDCA need high, consistent standards. Although the notes below apply only to social media posted under the HDCA name (ie not as individuals) they may generally be worth reflecting on for personal use.

Note 2: This policy to be reviewed after 6 months once HDCA have more experience of social media.

Note 3: At least 3 people in the committee should have access to the HDCA social media accounts so that they can post, make corrections and respond to comments in a timely manner. This is particularly important if the social media manager is not available

Note 4: This policy can be used in conjunction with the Social Media Toolkit produced by Cycling UK which can be downloaded by following this link: https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/2017/08/social_media_toolkit_2_002_jr_edit.pdf

What is Social Media and Why is it Important for HDCA:

Social media are online platforms that facilitate the creation or sharing of information, ideas, interests and other forms of expression. Broadly speaking, social media platforms have the following characteristics:

- User-generated content, such as text posts or comments, digital photos or videos, and information generated online such as blogs, news stories etc.
- Users create profiles and identities for the website or app that are designed and maintained by the social media organisation.
- Social media facilitate the development of online social networks by connecting a group to other individuals or groups.

Social Media can be very important for engaging with the community to identify local needs and priorities. It can also be a tool for helping to understand, and sometimes shape, public opinion; for building up community support; and for promoting the activities of HDCA.

For the purpose of this policy, we will use the following platforms:

Facebook

Twitter

Instagram

Role of Social Media Manager:

- To determine which posts go live, and when.
- To liaise with HDCA committee re content: text and photos .
- To ensure high quality of communication.
- To ensure relevance of posts to show breadth of work and ambition of HDCA.
- To increase the number of likes, follows and conversations about promoting cycling in the District of Harrogate and Knaresborough and surrounding locale.

- To monitor the impact of social media and report to HDCA committee
- To respond in a timely manner to all relevant comments.
- To protect and promote the reputation of HDCA as it appears in social media.
- To contact and follow relevant groups whose posts we can share and who can share our posts, thus spreading our message (See list of proposed groups in Appendix 1).
- To feedback comments (complementary or otherwise) about HDCA to the committee.
- To develop capacity for social media management.
- To consider Facebook promotions in line with other paid for advertising, and to pre-approved budget.
- To prepare short quarterly update for HDCA committee.
- To review social media strategy and policy 6 months after implementation.

Content which Social Media Manager can post without specific approval of committee:

- Posts from HDCA committee members.
- 6-10 posts per platform per week. These should mostly be in line with the aims of HDCA: the encouragement of cycling as a healthy, safe and enjoyable activity for all ages as an alternative mode of transport.
- About the benefits of using cycling as a form of transport on health, the environment, and the economy.
- Good news stories of activities aimed at increasing cycling as a form of transport in other towns and cities across the UK and the rest of the world.
- Posts from other cycling and active transport groups; sharing and retweeting posts as much as possible.
- Content provided by people who post to HDCA if it meets our guidelines.

Content which Social Media Manager should gain specific approval of board for in advance:

- Negative or upsetting stories.
- Petitions, letter writing to politicians and policy makers.
- Promotion of activity which may be interpreted as criticism of HBC or NYCC (because we need to work with them).
- Promotion of activity which may potentially be defined as illegal.
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Guidelines for all social media posts:

Our social media content must be relevant to our audience to resonate with them. If in doubt, ask yourself how they'll respond to the post you've just written. Will they be excited? Shocked? Amused? Or indifferent?

Unfortunately many cycling topics can be very divisive and lead to very negative and damaging comments even within the cycling community eg the wearing of crash helmets. Thus we should avoid posting directly on these topics. Where they come up in comments requiring a response, then we should be polite and follow Cycling UK policy on the topic.

When making a post, also bear in mind the following:

- HDCA is apolitical. This applies equally to social media.

- The bulk of posts should be about cycling for utility and pleasure, the benefits of cycling and cycling infra-structure, not about sports cycling.
- Posts must be hopeful, positive, friendly and helpful.
- Posts must be respectful and empathetic, only post encouraging messages and stories.
- No racial, ethnic, sexual, religious, physical disability or other slurs. If we see these comments from the public they are to be removed.
- Authenticity of posts is important: reference credible sources where necessary (eg linking to a news website).
- Hashtag appropriately (check suitability first).
- Avoid looking as if it is the same 2 or 3 people leading every activity – this means may often say “members” rather than giving names.
- If even slightly uneasy about something then discuss with the Chair or members of the committee before posting.
- At least one or two photos per post, if possible.
- Photos must follow safeguarding guidance below.
- Send text and photos to HDCA Social Media Manager as far in advance as possible.

Guidelines for all social media likes and comments:

- HDCA will not usually like or comment on other people’s posts unless it links the reader directly to HDCA work (this is partly because it would be too time consuming, also to protect reputation).
- Don’t escalate heated discussions, try to be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations. Never contribute to a discussion if you are angry or upset, return to it later when you can contribute to it in a calm and rational manner.

Safeguarding guidelines

- No names of children.
- Analysis shows photos of local members gains the most interest. However:
 - No photo of anyone who has not given verbal permission (unless is a share of a photo posted by another group or individual),
 - No photo of identifiable children without parental permission (unless the children are with a school group, and the school confirms they have parental permission for photos to go onto social media),
 - The person who submits the photo to social media is responsible for checking permission has been given before sending for upload.

Copyright and legal aspects:

- The person who submits photos for social media is responsible for checking ownership. This is easy if you take your own photo.
- Photos and text must be credited to original owner/site. This is easy if it is a link.
- Copyright must be respected as a legal obligation.
- Confidentiality must be respected.

Appendix 1

By following other groups, sharing content and commenting on posts, HDCA can spread the message and connect with other groups and individuals. Following National pro-cycling groups or people, we can gain access to interesting stories to share. Local groups can help HDCA to engage with a broader group of local people and businesses.

The following is a list of groups, organisations and people that we should consider following and interacting with in order to raise our profile and provide content for posting. This list is not exclusive and we shall add others as appropriate:

National Organisations and People

Cycling UK
Sustrans
Chris Boardman
Carlton Reid
Peter Walker
Green Peace
Friends of the Earth
Cycling Professor
Camcycle
Leeds Cycling Campaign
York Cycle Campaign

Local Groups

Resurrection Bikes
Harrogate Advertiser
Wheel Easy
Knaresborough Spinners
Harrogate Nova
Cappuccino Cycling
Ripon City Cycle Club
Ripon Cycling Club
Zero Carbon Harrogate
Open Harrogate
Hedgehog Cycling