



Botley, Hedge End and District u3a social media Policy

This policy is intended for all trustees, facilitators and members of the charity. Before engaging in social media activity, members must read this policy which contains guidance that will help to adhere to u3a standards.

The policy will be reviewed every three years. Botley, Hedge End and District u3a will amend this policy where appropriate and as required.

Date of last review: 15th July 2025

What is social media?

Social media is the collective term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create, share and interact with content (words, images, graphics and video content), as well as network with each other through the sharing of information, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media platforms include Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Twitch and TikTok.

Why do we use social media and for what can we use it?

Social media is useful to the success of communicating Botley, Hedge End and District u3a's work. It is valuable for designated trustees, facilitators and members to participate in social media to engage with our audiences and stakeholders and raise the profile of Botley, Hedge End and District u3a.

Some trustees, facilitators and members may also support the charity's work using their personal accounts. This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which risks or conflicts might arise.

Building an engaged online community can lead to more significant long-term support and involvement from supporters. [Social media guidance from the Charity Commission](#) (September 2023) conveys how social media can be a highly effective way for a charity to engage its audiences and communicate about its work.

Social media helps us to:

- Promote our events
- Share our news and updates
- Engage in important conversations with stakeholders
- Celebrate our successes
- Raise awareness of prominent issues and challenges
- Advertise opportunities
- Support our activities
- Increase our membership
- Build an online supportive community
- Raise our public profile and strengthen our reputation

Why do we need a social media policy?

While social media brings the charity to a wide audience, it can also present risks. We want to ensure that all trustees, facilitators and members using social media represent and reflect Botley, Hedge End and District u3a in the best way possible. It is also important to mitigate risks (such as reputational or legal issues) associated with the use of social media to protect trustees, facilitators and members reputation.

Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations and is subject to the same laws as other kinds of publication or commentary in the public domain.

Failure to comply with this policy could expose Botley, Hedge End and District u3a to reputational damage as well as putting members at risk.

Everyone is responsible for their compliance with this policy.

Please refer to our group policies (<https://botley-hedge-end.u3asite.uk/policies/>) for further information on our processes. Trustees, facilitators and members who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach policies should seek advice from the group's publicity officer or website manager.

Application

This policy applies to all social media platforms used by members and volunteers (including trustees) in a professional and personal capacity.

This policy also applies to online blogs, wikis, podcasts, forums, and messaging based apps, such as WhatsApp. Social media can be accessed in various ways, including from a desktop or laptop computer, tablet or smartphone. This policy applies to the use of all such devices.

Internet access and monitoring usage

Botley, Hedge End and District u3a provides a Facebook page (with restricted access) and the Botley, Hedge End and District website (<https://botley-hedge-end.u3asite.uk/>) which is publicly available.

Our Publicity officer and Website manager are responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of these social media channels. If there are any questions on any aspect of these channels, please speak to them or to one of our committee members.

When using the social media channels on the groups behalf, it is important that Trustees, facilitators and members refer to our group policies (<https://botley-hedge-end.u3asite.uk/policies/>). Refer to these policies for guidance. Members are permitted to make reasonable and appropriate use of personal social media activity in line with the group's ethos.

Policy ownership

The Publicity officer is responsible for authorising and updating this document. The policy must be approved by the trustees and reviewed every three years unless a significant change requires the organisation to check the policy before the next review date. All Trustees, facilitators and members will be notified of updates.

Using Botley, Hedge End and District u3a's social media channels

Know our social media guardians.

The Publicity officer and Website manager are responsible for setting up and managing Botley, Hedge End and District u3a's social media channels and have overall ownership of these accounts.

The Publicity officer and Website manager will uphold best practices for channel security with secure passwords that regularly change, never give out the passwords for our channels without express permission from the committee.

Handover of ownership if a role changes

Ownership of the social media accounts must be handed over to another appropriate committee member if the holders of the social media accounts change role or leave Botley, Hedge End and District u3a.

Be an ambassador for our brand.

Trustees, facilitators and members must ensure they reflect Botley, Hedge End and District u3a's values in what they post. Our brand guidelines follow the guidelines of the national u3a organisation (<https://www.u3a.org.uk/>) which sets out the style that all Trustees, facilitators and members should refer to when posting content on Botley, Hedge End and District u3a's social media channels and any other related community Facebook accounts.

Pause and think before posting.

When posting from Botley, Hedge End and District u3a's social media account, members must respond to comments in the voice of our charity and not allow personal opinions to influence responses.

Trustees, facilitators and members must make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for Botley, Hedge End and District u3a to further its ethos. All content must accurately reflect Botley, Hedge End and District u3a's agreed policies (<https://botley-hedge-end.u3asite.uk/policies/>)

Support

Those responsible for the management of our social media accounts should answer questions as swiftly as possible to help and engage with our service users, members and supporters.

There may be times where members or volunteers could be subject to unpleasant or abusive comments directed at the charity, our work or people. We encourage everyone who is on social media on behalf of the charity to be aware of our safeguarding and wellbeing practices and to raise any issues with online abuse with the committee where necessary.

It is also vital that Botley, Hedge End and District u3a does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials in pursuit of social media engagement. For example, a video of a stunt or visiting an unsafe location.

Trustees, facilitators and members 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.

Legalities

Defamation: is when a false statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published in print or online. When posting content on social media in a u3a capacity, users should not bring the group into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright law: It is critical that users abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, when representing the charity. 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, facilitators and members make must not breach confidentiality. Examples include information meant for internal use, information that Botley, Hedge

End and District u3a is not ready to disclose yet (i.e. a feature that is embargoed for a particular date) or information on members with which is private.

Safety: Trustees, facilitators and members should be vigilant regarding suspicious content or links and must not reveal personal, confidential or sensitive information about themselves such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers.

Be wary of fake accounts that may claim to be Botley, Hedge End and District u3a and if found, they should be alerted immediately to any committee member.

Discrimination and harassment: Trustees, facilitators and members should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official Botley, Hedge End and District u3a social media channel or a personal account.

Including:

- 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.

Please refer to the group policies at <https://botley-hedge-end.u3asite.uk/policies/>

Remain politically neutral.

Botley, Hedge End and District u3a is not associated with any political organisation or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. It is essential that Botley, Hedge End and District u3a remains, and is seen to be, politically neutral.

Check facts.

Trustees, facilitators and members should not automatically assume that material that's shared or included in any post is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification. If a mistake is found, please contact a committee member.

Seek advice for complaints.

If a complaint is made on Botley, Hedge End and District u3a's social media channels, Trustees, facilitators and members should seek advice from the committee before responding.

Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis because they are sensitive or risk considerable damage to the charity's reputation. If any member becomes aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on Botley, Hedge End and District u3a's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to any committee member immediately. It is the responsibility of all Trustees, facilitators and members to report complaints or comments that could have serious implications for the charity.

Accessibility

In line with Botley, Hedge End and District u3a's equality, diversity and inclusion policy, we endeavour to ensure our social media is as accessible as possible. Please refer to our Equality and Diversity policy (<https://botley-hedge-end.u3asite.uk/policies/>)

Botley, Hedge End and District u3a Social Media Policy Agreement

We have read and understood the Botley, Hedge End and District u3a social media policy and agree to abide by the rules set out in this policy and I understand that failing to abide by this policy may result in disciplinary action.

On behalf of the Botley, Hedge End and District u3a trustees:

Name:

Role:

Signed:

Date:

Name:

Role:

Signed:

Date: