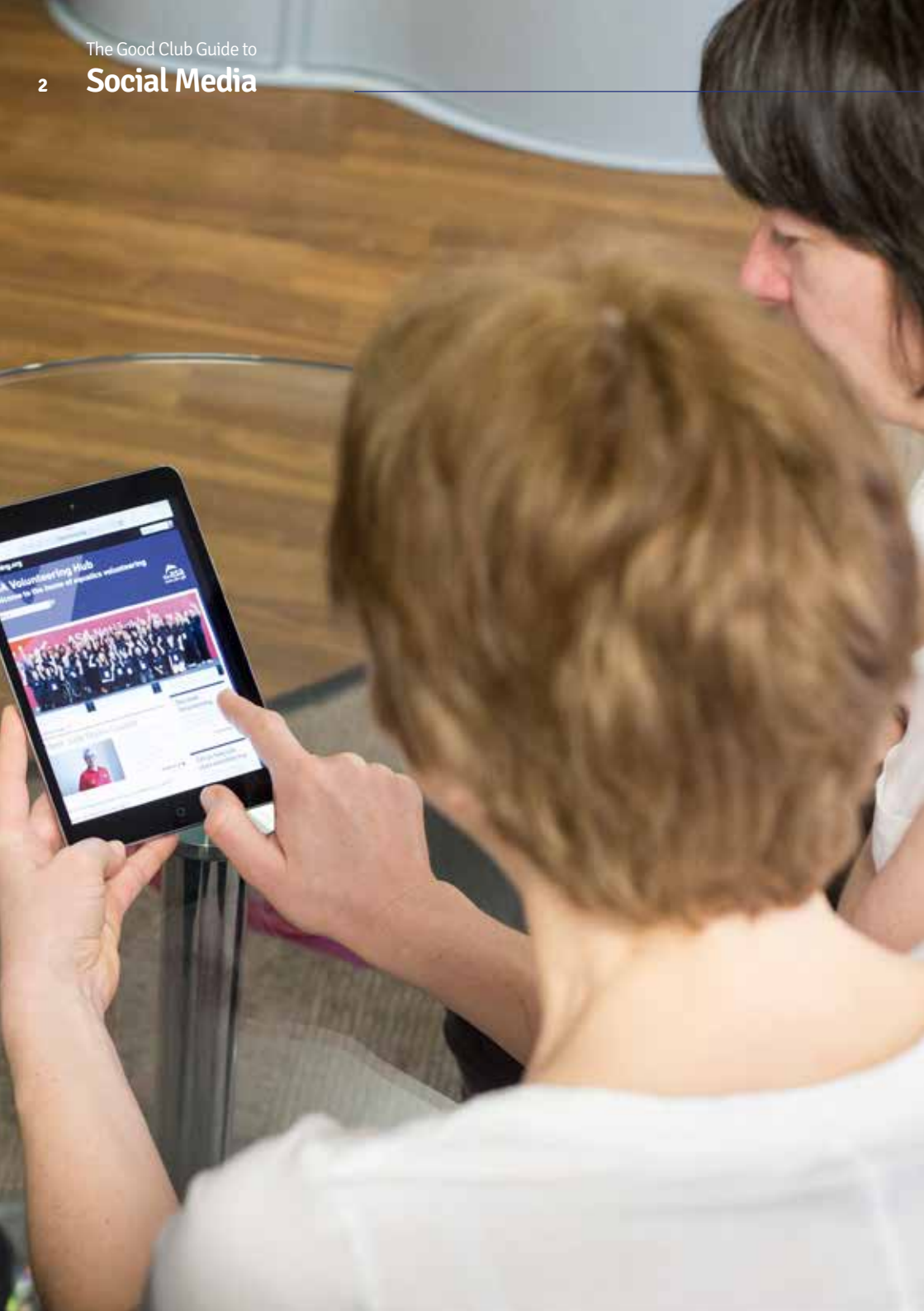


ASA  
**VOLUNTEER**  
ENGAGEMENT

The Good Club Guide to  
**Social Media**



  
the **asa**  
*swim for life*



## Welcome

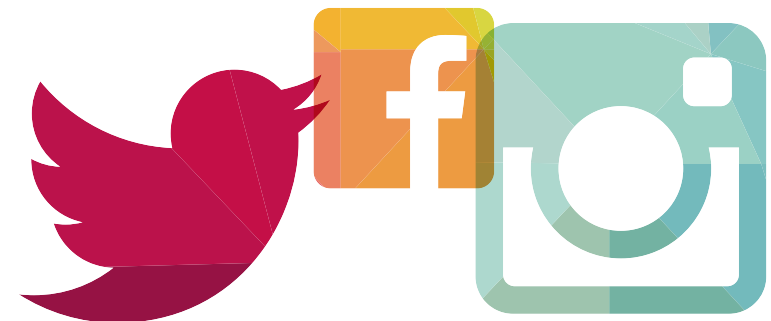
Welcome to the ASA Good Club Guide to Social Media. There has been a growing awareness of the increase of social media within clubs and by their members, with digital social communication becoming the norm.

This resource has been designed to provide an introduction to using social media, as well as recommendations of best practice to all ASA club members and parents on the use of social networking sites.

## How this resource will help you

This resource will:

- Provide an introduction to the different social media platforms.
- Give you a basic understanding of how to use social networking as a tool to promote your club.
- Suggest hints and tips about how to engage with your audience.
- Offer advice on the safe use of social media.



## What is social media?

Social media is the term for social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter which enable online interaction between individuals and groups of people with similar interests and hobbies.

Users of social media establish an online 'profile' on a networking website containing information about themselves, which might include:

- Personal information
- Social events
- Activities and interests
- Likes and dislikes
- Friends
- Photos
- Videos

These sites allow users to create their own content and share it with a vast network of individuals, known as online communities.

Social networking is widely used to promote sports activities, campaigns and events. Groups, clubs and other sports organisations also use it to communicate with coaches, officials and participants (including young people) regarding club news.

Whilst social media can provide exciting opportunities, it's important to understand that there is also a risk of danger and negative consequences if these sites are abused.

Many social networking sites have age restrictions. To be eligible to sign up to Facebook or Twitter, you must be at least 13 years old. It's recommended that you do not encourage young members to use social networking sites, and do not engage with any young members online, for safeguarding reasons and to ensure your own protection against any potential allegations.

## Social media and your organisation

Millions of organisations around the world use social media as a way of communicating and engaging with their customers. Social media platforms can be a powerful tool for marketing your club and, regardless of the club's size, can be used to promote the club's activities and achievements, and to interact with different stakeholders associated with the club – all at no cost!

Through social media, you can discover new and exciting ways to reach your target audience, and when used correctly, can drive engagement with other parts of your organisation, such as your website. You can reach audiences from all different walks of life, of a variety of ages and with differing or common interests.

In the UK alone, there are around 38 million active users on social media accounts, so it is important to ensure your club is in a position to capitalise on this huge audience and know how to make your club's voice heard.

## The different forms of social media

Social media and social networking sites are accessible, quick and user-friendly once you get started, but it's important to consider which social media platform is right for you and your club.

## You may want to think about:

- How your club wants to use social media and what you want to achieve.
- Which social media sites are the most popular with your target audience (e.g. members/parents/players/sponsors, etc.).
- The resources you need, including who has the skills to manage your club's social media presence.

## Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com))

Facebook is currently the world's most popular social network, with over 1.5 billion users each month and over 43% of the UK's social media users having an active account.

Facebook can be a great way for your club to connect with its members and volunteers by sharing photos, videos and text updates. Your Facebook page can also be a powerful marketing and communication tool for your club. It can help you achieve a variety of goals including:

- Helping to build a community around your club.
- Allowing you to celebrate and share your club's successes.
- Giving live updates from your events or matches.
- Signposting people to your website.
- Building new relationships and strengthening existing ones.
- Increasing membership or attracting new volunteers.
- Keeping people up to date with what's new in your club.

### Steps for setting up your club's Facebook page:

1. Set up a Facebook profile. A business page has to be managed from a personal profile page, but it's important to keep the two separate – do not make the error of using a personal page as a business/club page.
2. Do not use your current personal profile; set up a new, generic profile. Make sure you don't add any friends to the account. Change your privacy settings to only allow 'friends of friends' to search for you and see your posts. This way you will only receive notifications when people post to your business page.
3. When your profile is set up, click on the menu arrow in the top right corner and select the option, 'Create Page'. Choose the type of organisation and complete all of the relevant information. Remember that this page will be seen by club members, sponsors, parents of members, etc., so ensure that the name is appropriate and easy to find.

### Facebook top tips:

- Have a unique and easy to find page, making sure you include the club's logo, motto, tagline and contact details (web address, contact phone number/s, email address/es).
- Use videos and images as well as text, and pick your avatar/logo (the image that will be used to show who you are) and cover photos carefully, to ensure these represent your club.
- Keep your page vibrant and engage members – why not ask for their views?
- Link with other relevant Facebook pages and your club website which your audience may be interested in. Don't be afraid to post about an article you have found somewhere else – if your audience finds it interesting, they will return for more!
- Post up to date information including training times, fixtures, results and achievements.
- Do not use 'text speak' such as 'LOL' and 'OMG'. Check spelling, grammar and punctuation and only abbreviate if you're sure your audience will understand. While social media can be more informal in tone and language, you're still representing your club, so try to look and sound professional.



## Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com))

Twitter currently has over 310 million users worldwide and on average 300 million tweets are sent every day.

Twitter can be a good way for your club to share your latest updates and stories, making it a great way to connect with individuals, other clubs who share your interests and passions, and the ASA. Twitter is a free social networking service that has changed the way many clubs communicate, interact with their audience and engage with key stakeholders. Each tweet is limited to 140 characters, so you will need to keep things ‘to the point’.

### Using Twitter enables your club to:

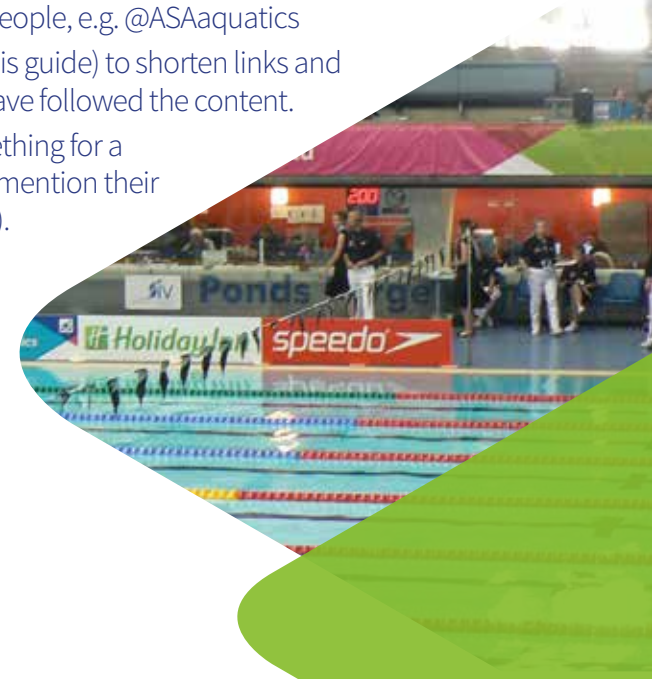
- Keep people updated in real time on the latest clubs news and events.
- Find out what other people are saying about your club and start a conversation by responding to their tweets.
- Give and receive live updates from your competitions or events using a hashtag to group all tweets together and make them easily searchable.

### Setting up your Twitter profile

1. First you need to register, using your business/club name rather than your own name. Use a club email address if you have one and choose a secure password, combining letters and numbers.
2. Create a relevant and catchy username (“Twitter handle”) for your club, limiting characters where possible.
3. Choose a profile picture and background carefully – use a logo or photo which represents your club. The dimensions of the picture should be 1500 x 500 pixels to ensure the image quality is not affected when uploaded, and at a resolution of at least 72dpi. Try not to use too much text and keep it in the top two thirds of the image, as part of the header will be hidden by your logo/profile picture.

### Twitter top tips:

- Keep it short and sweet – remember you only have 140 characters per tweet. This means you may have to get creative, but not at the expense of good English. Try not to use abbreviations such as ‘U’ instead of ‘you’.
- ‘A picture is worth a thousand words’, so use images and link to videos to keep things interesting.
- Use natural, conversational language and tweet like you talk.
- Remember the three Ps – be polite, positive and professional, as you are representing your club.
- Time your tweets to coincide with events.
- Make the most of using a hashtag (#) for particular topics to make content visible to a wider audience, but remember not to put spaces in your hashtag, e.g. #ASANat2016 #Swimming #Sheffield. If you have an event in a particular area, hashtag the nearest city or town. Also look to see which hashtags are popular (trending), and if topics are relevant, utilise that hashtag to get picked up by a much larger audience.
- Where possible, include other people in your tweets to get more traction and reach more people, e.g. @ASAaquatics
- Use Bitly (see later on in this guide) to shorten links and track how many people have followed the content.
- If you are promoting something for a stakeholder, always try to mention their Twitter handle (username).



## The best of the rest

### Instagram

Instagram has 400 million active monthly users and is the fastest growing social media network amongst young people. Pictures from Instagram can be shared instantly across multiple platforms including Facebook and Twitter.

Instagram is a fun way for people to quickly share their photos, but it is also great for sharing professional looking pictures of your sporting or club events. Images must be taken on a mobile phone, or sent to your mobile through an email client and then uploaded from your pictures.

Instagram also uses hashtags to group together collections of images, e.g. at an event, or to help make the images more visible to a wider audience, just like Twitter.

When sharing pictures on Instagram, always make sure that you take safeguarding precautions. Do not follow your club members. You should always have consent of the individual or parent/guardian, and all images of children under the age of 18 must be a) above the waist or, b) of them in full clothing, not swim suits. You can see the full guidelines in the ASA Photography Guidance.

### YouTube

YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world, rivaled only by Google. More than 1 billion unique users visit YouTube each month to view videos.

YouTube is great for sharing videos of your sporting and community events and linking these back to your club website or Facebook page will bring them to life.

### LinkedIn

LinkedIn can provide good opportunities to promote your club, and build potential business and sponsorship relationships. Traditionally a site for professionals looking to network within industry and improve their reputation, LinkedIn now has over 15 million registered users in the UK alone. You can use LinkedIn to keep in touch with existing or potential members, volunteers and sponsors.

### Thunderclap

Thunderclap is not a social networking site, but it is an easy way to say something and to help get your message heard. Thunderclap is the first ever crowd speaking platform that helps people be heard by saying something together. It allows a single message to be mass-shared, flash mob-style, so it rises above the noise of your social networks. By boosting the signal at the same time, Thunderclap looks to spread an idea or message through Facebook and Twitter. Thunderclap sets the goalposts: one message, one number, one date.



**Getting started with Bitly**

Bitly is an important tool which should be attached to all of your social media accounts. It allows you to shorten your hyperlinks, so for instance: [www.swimming.org/volunteering/about-volunteering/](http://www.swimming.org/volunteering/about-volunteering/) would become <http://bit.ly/1LWYEDW> which makes your tweets look tidier.

Bitly also allows you to track how many people clicked on any link you have shortened, what social media platform they have clicked through from, and also the date that they clicked on your link.

This means that if you are planning to use the same link to go out in a series of different tweets, you can work out which tweet was most effective through the number of clicks that your link received, and then use similar hashtags or mention the same Twitter user in order to increase clicks on future campaigns.

To set up a Bitly account, just visit [www.bitly.com](http://www.bitly.com). In this instance, it doesn't matter what username you register with, as it is not external facing. However, it is probably best to use the same club email address that you have for other accounts to keep everything in one place.

**Ideas for social media content**

Here are some suggestions for how your club can use social media:

- News and announcements.
- Events.
- ASA news relevant to your club.
- ASA products and services relevant to your club.
- 'Thank you' to a person or organisation that has gone the extra mile.
- Competitions.
- Competition results.
- Newsletter sign-ups.
- Seasonal tweets and posts related to Valentine's Day, Christmas, New Year, etc.
- Retweet athletes and share articles when relevant.
- Link to articles on the [swimming.org](http://swimming.org) website.

Keep up to date with all the latest news from the ASA through:

ASA Twitter account: [@ASAAquatics](https://twitter.com/ASAAquatics)

ASA Facebook account: [www.facebook.com/ASAswimming](http://www.facebook.com/ASAswimming)

ASA Instagram account: [@asaaquatics](https://www.instagram.com/asaaquatics)

## Good Practice Guidelines

The ASA recognises that the use of social networking sites is a rapidly growing phenomenon and is increasingly being used as the communication tool of choice by young people and adults.

While social networking can provide exciting opportunities for helping your club engage with members and the public, it can also present a number of dangers and negative consequences if abused by users, such as:

- Cyber bullying, through posts which are upsetting to people and often inaccurate.
- Causing offence to individuals, or other clubs and organisations.
- Exposure to inappropriate content, or offensive comments or pictures.

The ASA has produced detailed guidance on the use of social networking, which can be found in Wavepower; a link to which can be found at the end of this guide. This guidance offers advice to coaches, parents, teachers and officials, as well as other officers in a position of trust and responsibility in respect of children in an ASA club.

It's important that clubs have a good understanding of Wavepower's guidance, but for the purpose of this guide, key points to note are:

1. ASA members in a position of trust and/or responsibility should not be in direct contact with young people through social networking sites.
2. Should a young person in your club request to become a 'friend' on your social networking site, or request that you become a 'friend' on their own social networking site, you should decline if:
  - a. You are in a position of responsibility in respect of that child.
  - b. You hold a position of trust and responsibility in your club.
  - c. Your contact with the child is through an ASA club and the parent/guardian of the child does not give their consent to such contact.
3. The social network site should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise ASA members, ASA clubs, or any member of the public or other organisation and to do so may be in breach of ASA Rules and Regulations.
4. The publishing of a photograph or video footage on a social networking site is governed by the same requirements as those contained in the ASA Photography Policy. Always make sure that you take safeguarding precautions.

All images of children under the age of 18 must be:

- > Above the waist; or
- > In full clothing, not swim suits.

You can see the full guidelines in the ASA Photography Policy.

5. Be wary of publishing any identifying information about yourself or others, either in your profile or in your posts. Remember not to include personal details, such as phone numbers, workplaces, school names, addresses or birthdays.



## Summary

We hope you have found this guide informative. We wish you a great experience as a volunteer within aquatics and thank you once again for all the time and commitment you are giving to the sport.

## swim21

swim21 is the ASA's quality mark for the development of effective, ethical and sustainable clubs. The opportunity to gain swim21 accreditation is available to all ASA affiliated clubs, across any of the aquatic disciplines, regardless of size or activity delivered. swim21 is about creating the best possible aquatic experience for all and raising the quality of aquatic provision across all areas. The swim21 programme enhances club management, strengthens the structures and unites the club with shared goals to ensure the best environment is available for all swimmers.

To find out more about swim21 and the associated benefits, please visit [www.swimming.org/asa/clubs-and-members/swim21-accreditation](http://www.swimming.org/asa/clubs-and-members/swim21-accreditation).

## Equality and diversity

Is your club as inclusive as it could be? Does your club truly reflect the local demographics? Aquatic sports can and should be made accessible to everyone, to the greatest extent possible. Opening your club to everyone will aid with sustainability, add new dimensions to the club's social element, and you may even find talent, in many different forms, where you least expect it.

Read more about the ASA's commitment to equality and diversity and find further support for clubs at this link: [www.swimming.org/asa/about-us/equality](http://www.swimming.org/asa/about-us/equality).

## Further information

The ASA accepts no liability for any errors or omissions in this resource. Further, whilst it is hoped that volunteers will find this resource useful, no liability arising out of its use can be accepted by the ASA or the club. Statistical information is correct as of April 2016.

This resource is not a contract of employment and the role you undertake as a volunteer will not create an employment relationship between you and the club or the ASA.

## ASA Volunteering Hub

Did you know that the ASA has a dedicated hub for volunteers? To access this hub, go to [www.swimming.org/volunteering](http://www.swimming.org/volunteering) or email us at [volunteering@swimming.org](mailto:volunteering@swimming.org).

## Acknowledgements

The ASA Volunteer Engagement Team are grateful for the contributions of both staff and volunteers who supported the creation of this resource. The knowledge and experience of those involved is vital to ensuring these materials are as beneficial as possible.



### Useful Links

Wavepower

[www.swimming.org/asa/clubs-and-members/safeguarding-children/](http://www.swimming.org/asa/clubs-and-members/safeguarding-children/)

NSPCC Net Aware [www.net-aware.org.uk/](http://www.net-aware.org.uk/)

Club Matters [www.sportenglandclubmatters.com](http://www.sportenglandclubmatters.com)

The CPSU [www.cpsu.org.uk](http://www.cpsu.org.uk)

TweetDeck: Twitter Dashboard and Scheduler

<https://tweetdeck.twitter.com/>

Thunderclap [www.thunderclap.it/](http://www.thunderclap.it/)



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