Guidance on using Facebook

This guide has been very kindly put together by volunteer [Dave Pannell](#), from the Take a Hike group.

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What is the point of Facebook?

It's estimated that 51% of all UK adults have a Facebook account.

This means that no matter what walk of life you are in, or what demographic you belong to, you will find a large proportion of the people you know in real life are already interacting on Facebook. They'll be using it daily to keep up with news from their friends, or using it less frequently to keep in touch with extended family.

The more users Facebook has, the more money it can make from advertisers so it's developed from a social platform for students into a "hub" for people of all ages, many who will check their Facebook page throughout the day.

How does it work?

Facebook works by "friending" people online that you already know in the real world, or want to be connected to, by sending them a "friend request".

Once this person accepts your friend request, you can then view their profile and any items that they "post" - ie, they may write a short update about what they did that day or upload a photograph.

When you log into Facebook, you are presented with a "news feed" of what everyone has "posted", usually in chronological order. Next to each item (be that a photo, video or just a couple of lines of text) you will see a little photograph of the person that posted it. If you click on that person, you will be taken to their profile page, where you can see just the items that person has posted and what information they have uploaded to their page about themselves.

Why should Ramblers groups use it?

Facebook allows organisations to set up an organisational or company "page". For example, the Ramblers: https://www.facebook.com/ramblers. Pages can't "friend" people on Facebook in the traditional way, instead people choose to "like" the page to then see the page's posts in their newsfeed.

Facebook has two major uses for a Ramblers group:

(i)   It is a **quick and free** way to promote your news to your members, instead of having to wait for them to have to come to you. As the average Facebook user checks their "newsfeed" at least once a day to see what all their friends have been posting about, you can make sure your news is appearing within this, rather than having to wait for people to visit your website. For example, if in the morning you post "Don't forget we've got an evening walk starting at 7.00pm at the Rose and Crown this evening",

the people who like your page will see this reminder in amongst the news from all their friends whilst they are browsing their Facebook newsfeed over breakfast.

(ii)   The second main use is to **attract new members**. Because Facebook is set up to be public and sociable, it is easy to attract new people to "like" your page. If you promote your Facebook page on your newsletter, walks diary or website, you will soon find that people you have no direct contact with start to like your group's page which can then be used to inform them of the walks, socials or campaigns you are running and, in time, generate new members.

Is it complicated to use?

This depends on your own experience of using the Internet. Facebook is a little more complicated than normal websites as it is interactive, and a little more complicated than Twitter as there is a lot more you can do on it. If you are not familiar with Facebook you may want to ask someone who uses it personally to sit down and show you how it works. Once you see it in action, "newsfeeds", "likes" and "shares" become wonderfully easy to understand.

Over time, a number of short-hand icons and functions have developed on interactive websites such as Facebook, and website developers assume that everyone now knows what they mean - for example clicking on a cog icon usually changes something's settings, a down-arrow indicates that you can click on it to choose more options, a number in a small box indicates that you have a notification to read etc. If you regularly use social or interactive websites and these examples are all familiar to you, then you will find Facebook fairly intuitive.

If your experience of using the Internet is limited to just browsing information websites, then you may have to spend longer familiarising yourself with how Facebook works. Start by setting up a personal account, get to know how it works as a user first, and get used to posting updates, adding photographs and "friending" other people you already know in the real world.

Facebook also works differently if you are using it on a smartphone or tablet - in many ways the "mobile" version is stripped-back and much simpler to use, and the "app" version you can download onto your phone integrates with it so that a notification pings up whenever anyone likes or comments on something you post.

But don't be put off! Whatever experience you have, it is in the interest of Facebook to make their website as easy to use as possible, and anyone having spent a little time to familiarise themselves with the site will, over time, find it very simple to use on a day-to-day level.

Objectives

Facebook is a communication tool, and there is little point in setting up a Facebook page for your group if you are not going to regularly "post" on it. A loose strategy should be decided on for how you are going to use the page. Are you going to use it to remind people of upcoming walks and events, to get more people down to your pub meet, to encourage more walks leaders to come forward? Are you going to use it as an information tool, to repost campaigns or news about walking in your area? Are you going to use it as a recruitment tool to find other like-minded people in your area who may want to join your group?

In reality you will probably want to do a mix of all of the above, but having a clear idea of what you are going to use your Facebook page for means it will be far more effective.

Audiences

The vast majority of people who will "like" your page will be individual people who are following you on Facebook because they have an interest in walking in your area, or they are already members of your group.

However, your Group's Facebook page can also "like" other organisations, and they in return can "like" you! So you may wish to find and follow other local interest groups, local companies, newspapers, local authorities and even National Parks Authorities to receive their news, photos and updates - the best of which you can "share" with your own page followers.

Resource required

Although Facebook is free to use, it takes time, effort and some enthusiasm to develop a successful page that people interact with. Facebook pages can be managed by just one person, or a number of different people to spread the workload. If you do use a number of people to manage a page, then they have to communicate with each other about who will post what kind of content and when.

There are options to pay Facebook to help build up your following, in fact if you are running a Facebook page on behalf of a business or group you will find it hard to miss these options. If you would like to know more about paying for advertising on Facebook, see **Boosting or promoting posts** later in this guide.

Practicalities

One criticism levelled (not unfairly) at Facebook, is that they can change their systems without notice. Facebook is a website in evolution, so whereas the instructions below were correct in the summer of 2013, you may find they have frustratingly changed since and you need to spend a little time looking to find where the correct option has moved to.

Sometimes the easiest way to find what you are looking for on Facebook is to go to the "cog" icon at the top right of your page, and choose the "help" option from the drop-down menu. You can then type in a question or search term to get a link to what you are wanting to do. Alternatively, you can go direct to Facebook's own help centre here: https://www.facebook.com/help

Setting up an account

You have two options on Facebook. If you already use Facebook personally, you can create a page that is affiliated with your account so that you don't have to log-out, and then log back in again as your page. This is the simplest way to set up a page, and once set up you can then invite other people you are friends with on Facebook to be administrators of this page so that they can add things to it too without having to log-out of their personal accounts.

However, you can create a completely stand-alone Facebook page, with separate usernames and password that anyone can log into to post on it, without the need of having to have a personal Facebook account.

Setting up a stand-alone page not linked to your personal account
1. Go to www.facebook.com.
2. If you are already logged into Facebook on your personal account, click on the cog icon at the top right and select log-out to see the default Facebook welcome screen.
3. The page will invite you to sign-up for Facebook, and at the bottom you will see a small, separate link saying "Create a page for a celebrity, band or business". Although the page you are setting up will be for none of these, this is the link you want to click!
4. Next you will be asked what kind of page you are setting up. Choose "Company, organisation or institution".
5. Now you will be asked to choose a category for your page. We recommend simply choosing the generic "organisation", unless you feel that one of the other categories better describes your group. However, you don't need to worry about this as what category you choose has no bearing on how your page works.
6. You will also be asked to enter a "company" name. Keep this simple and give it your group's name, such as "North Kirklees Ramblers". Consider how members of the public might search for you if they wanted to find your group on Facebook.
7. Check the box to say you agree to Facebook's terms and then click "Get Started".
8. You will now be prompted to log-in to Facebook. Instead, choose the link that says "create a business account". This now gives you the option to create a "business" Facebook account, meaning that you can give anyone the username and password to be able to update the Facebook page.

9.   You will also have to log-out of any personal account and log-back into this business account to update the page.

10.   You will need to use an email address to sign-up for a business account, and you may want to use your group's main contact email address instead of your personal one if you have one.

Setting up a page from within your own personal Facebook account

If you plan to be updating your page regularly, you may wish the Facebook page to be part of your own personal Facebook account. You can still allow other people to manage the page by adding them as page administrators, and you don't have to log-out and log back in again to update you page.

Notifications (the alerts telling you that someone has interacted with your page) will also appear alongside your own personal notifications, meaning that you can see instantly when anything happens on your page. Outside viewers will not be able to see any of your own personal information linked with the page.

1. To set up a page from your own account, go to www.facebook.com and log in with your email address and password.
2. The option to create a page is currently very hidden away. When you are logged in and looking at your newsfeed - scroll down until you see a very small navigation on the right hand of the page saying "Privacy, Terms, Cookies, More" and click on the More option to bring up a drop-down menu.
3. Half way down this you will see an option "Create Page".
4. If you cannot find this option, instead, simply go to Facebook's help option and type "How do I create a page?" which will give you a direct link.
5. The procedure is now the same as if you were creating a page as a stand-alone account.
6. You will be asked what kind of page you are setting up. Choose "Company, organisation or institution"
7. Now you will be asked to choose a category for your page. We recommend simply choosing the generic "organisation", unless you feel that one of the other categories better describes your group. However, you don't need to worry about this as what category you choose has no bearing on how your page works.
8. You will also be asked to enter a "company" name. Keep this simple and give it your group's name, such as "North Kirklees Ramblers" and consider how members of the public will search for your group
9. Check the box to say you agree to Facebook's terms and then click "Get Started".

Starting out

Now you have created a page, Facebook may give you an animated tour of the different options open to you. If Facebook does lead you through the setup of your page by prompting you to add a profile photo etc then it is easiest to just go with the flow and add them as it prompts you to.

If you don't follow the prompts, the first two things you should do is to upload a profile picture and a cover image.

Finding your page

It may sound silly, but once you have made a page sometimes it's not obvious how to get to it! If you have created a stand-alone page then it is easy, just log in and it is the only page you will see.

If you have created it from your own account, then when you log-in to your personal account, on the left sidebar you will see a new section has been added called "pages", and any pages that you manage will appear here.

Profile and cover images

Your profile image is the photograph that will be shown next to anything your page posts on Facebook. You can change this as often as you want, but there are a few pointers to follow:

1. The image displays as a square, so pick something that works in this ratio.
2. Most people will see the image as a small thumbnail, so it needs to be something that is clear, obvious and works at a small scale.
3. The image should be recognisable - so avoid the urge to keep changing your profile photo so that people get used to seeing the same one and associate it with your group.

To upload a new profile picture, just put your mouse over the current profile picture on your page and click the option to "edit profile picture". This then gives you various options to either choose from photographs you have already uploaded or to upload a new photo from your own computer.

Your cover image is a larger banner that is shown across the top of your page. You can use this to show whatever you like, although Facebook currently requests that you don't put more than 20% text on this image, so why not use it to show a group photo, a local landmark or ask people to send in photographs for it?

Publishing your page

Before anyone can see your page, you need to publish it.

Once you've added a profile picture, updated the "about" information and uploaded a cover image, select "publish this page" which should be shown in a banner across the top of any page that hasn't yet been published.

Note that very few things you do on Facebook are permanent, so if you are not sure if a profile photo will work, or you don't know if you have put information about your company in the right place - don't worry about it too much! You can always go back and edit things, and remember that Facebook's help centre (www.facebook.com/help) will cover how to do most things on your page.

Starting to post

Now you've got a page up and running, the fun can start.

Either log into your page if set up as a stand-alone account…

Or if you have set up the page from your own account click the little "cog" icon in the top right of the page and you will see the option to "use Facebook as..." and select your new page. This will take you to your page's homepage and change your profile picture at the top right of the page to your page's profile picture rather than your own. To go back to being "you" instead of your page, select the cog icon again and select you own name.

Note that everything you do (posting, liking, sharing etc) when you are "using Facebook as…" your group page, will be as your group page. So make sure you check the profile picture at the top right of the page before you start posting to avoid confusion!

Once you are at your new page, you want to look for the "status" box. In this box you can write a message to appear to your page's followers, paste a link to an article or website, or upload a photograph. Every time you do one of these things, it will be shown to the people who like your page, and also a copy will be posted onto your page's wall so people can see everything you've posted historically. Click the "post" button once you have composed your update to make it go live.

If someone likes what you have posted, they may show their approval by clicking the little "thumbs-up" icon on the post in their newsfeed, which is called a "like". Or they may even add a comment or reply to what you post by typing in the box underneath the post (note you can also reply to their comment as long as you are signed-in as your page). They can also "share" what you have posted with their own friends, which is shown by a little "document" icon with a folded corner on it.

Experiment with posting different types of messages, images and links and see how they appear. In the early days you will have very few people following your page, so don't worry about getting it wrong as you can always delete things later if you need to. To delete a post, just find it on your page and hover your mouse over the top right corner. This will then display a very faint "down-arrow" giving you options for this post, of which one of them is "delete".

Getting people to like your page

Building up a page following is very important, and can get quite addictive! Logging in and finding that another person has liked your page is always exciting, even if you have a page with hundreds or thousands of followers.

The number of people who currently "like" your page (and so can see what you post) is shown on your page's homepage as a number next to a large "thumbs-up" icon.

The easiest way to get people to like your page, is to tell them to! When you first create a page, the address of the page (so the bit at the top of the browser that starts www.facebook.com/pages/...) will be a horrible long string of numbers, but you can still copy this and paste it into an email so that people can copy it into their own browsers and visit your page. People should be able to enter the name of your page in the search box to find it also.

Email everyone in your group, tell them that you have a new Facebook page and ask them to go to it and "like" it if they are on Facebook. Also ask them to post a link on their own personal Facebook pages suggesting to their friends that they also "like" your new page. If you use Facebook personally yourself, do the same. The chance is that a large proportion of your own friends will have similar interests to you and be happy to like the new page.

If your group has a website, then make sure you put a link to your Facebook page on it. Consider asking the person who runs your website if they can add a Facebook "activity box" to the site. This box shows visitors to your website a miniature, stripped-back version of your page which includes all your latest posts and has a link to "like" the page direct from your website.

If you have a newsletter, tell people that you have a new Facebook page and give them a reason to follow it - such as "get weekly reminders of all our walks and latest footpath news in our area".

When logged-in as your page, search for and "like" other relative pages, such as countryside organisations or other local groups. You can then comment on their posts under the guise of your page, meaning that visitors to their pages will be able to click on that comment and see your page too.

When you find interesting links, repost these on your group's Facebook page, adding your own comment and recommend that people share it themselves. When someone shares your Facebook page's link, it will show that it was shared via your page and so advertise it to a wider audience.

Tips for using Facebook effectively

You need to develop a rhythm to posting on Facebook for two reasons. The first is that Facebook does not show all your posts to everyone who follows your group. This can be frustrating, but Facebook has an algorithm to work out which people see your posts by gauging how "interesting" you and your posts are.

It does this by first showing you post only to a small percentage of your followers and seeing if they click the like button, follow a link, re-share the content or add a comment to it. If your post generates some interactivity, it will then show it to more people. If it gets no interactivity it will show it to less. Facebook is also more likely to show your post to people who have liked and commented on your posts before, so you need to post a variety of content knowing that only a percentage of your followers will see each post.

Although this can be maddening, Facebook argues it is necessary. As well as having a couple of hundred friends on the site, Facebook users can also follow hundreds of pages – if it simply showed you everything that everyone posts you would drown in status updates.

You can see how successful your posts are by going to your group's Facebook page (logged-in as your group), and at the top of the admin panel above your group's page you will see a list of your recent posts, with how many people saw it. You can dig as far as you like into this data.

Further down the admin panel you will see a section called "Insights". Clicking on the "See all" link takes you to the full stats page, where you can see statistics about the age-range, gender and location of your page's followers - as well as which posts performed the best and what time of day your page followers are most active on Facebook.

Posting more of the kind of posts that proved most successful, alongside making them appear at a time of day when people are active on Facebook (usually early morning, lunch-time and late afternoon) means that more people will see more of what you post.

Scheduling

You should be aiming to post on your group's Facebook page at least a couple of times a week. The most successful pages post a couple of times a day, but if you post a lot of irrelevant information then Facebook will downgrade you for being "uninteresting" so make sure you only

post items that will be of genuine, specialist interest to your group even if that means posting less.

Of course, you may simply not have the time to post during the week - or be sat at your computer at the right time of day - so this is where a handy little function called scheduling comes in. Scheduling allows you to write posts for your Facebook page in advance, and then set a date and a time when you want them to be published.

This means that if you only have spare time on a weekend, you can spend an hour stacking-up your posts to be released at pre-set times during the week. It also means that if you have something that you regularly post, for example a reminder about a regular monthly pub-meet, or you know in advance what walks your group will be doing and want to publicise them in the week leading up to them, you can set these posts up weeks, or even months in advance and set them to show only at the appropriate time.

To schedule a post to show in the future, instead of immediately, go to your group's Facebook page (logged-in as your group) and when you start typing your status update, a small clock-symbol will appear to the left just beneath what you are typing. Selecting this lets you pick a date and a time when you want your post to appear. This can be later the same day, or in the future.

Once you have done this, the button that usually says "post" will now say "schedule" instead. Click it, and your post is saved into an area called your activity feed where it will sit until the time you have scheduled. To view all your scheduled posts, on your group's Facebook page click on "Edit page" at the top right, and from the drop-down menu select "Use activity log". From here you can change the scheduling time, or tell Facebook to show your post now instead. Note that (at the time of writing this guide) you cannot edit the content of the post if you spot a typo for instance. If you want to change a scheduled post, you will need to delete it and start it again.

So, what do I post?
You (or perhaps a group of volunteers) are now the kings and queens of your own little publishing empire!

You can post whatever you like, but, as with all publishing comes responsibility. Remember that Facebook is a public forum: whatever you post is now part of the Internet and reflects your group and the Ramblers as an association. As such, you should always aim to be positive, inclusive, informative and educational.

Start with posting about your group such as reminders of events, details of upcoming walks, and photographs of your walks. If you download the "Facebook Pages Manager" app on your smartphone you can even post photographs live from your walks if you can get a good enough

connection when you are out and about. Posts like this are great: images always get a better response than just text and it shows your members what they are missing out on, encouraging them to come along on future walks and events.

Next, find other related groups who are in Facebook (such as your local National Park etc) and look at what they are posting. When you are logged-in as your page instead of yourself, clicking on the Facebook logo in the top left of the page will show you a different kind of newsfeed - it will show all the posts of the pages that you "like" as your page, instead of personally. If you have found enough pages with similar interests, trawling through this will throw up lots of interesting, local content such as links to Park Ranger blogs, local news stories, appeals, photos from events etc. Share the items you think will be interesting to your own members.

You should also make wider posts about the Ramblers in general. Remember a proportion of your page's followers will not be Ramblers members - so keep an eye on the Ramblers website (http://www.ramblers.org.uk) and Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/ramblers) for news about campaigns and recent success stories and don't be afraid to repost them. You can also point out the benefits of joining the Ramblers and the work we do - again, use the main website as a resource if you haven't got your own.

Reading your local newspapers online is also a great way to find interesting things to post. Don't just put a link to the news story; add in a comment of your own about the story and how it affects walkers or members of your group. Note - if you copy and paste a website address into the status update box, Facebook will automatically make this into a little description, also pulling in a photograph from the page if it can find one. Once it has done this successfully, you can then delete the actual link that you just pasted in and write your own comment instead, but Facebook will still retain the link it has created. You can also edit the automated blurb Facebook pulls through to describe that website.

Finally, start asking your members for contributions. A successful "template" post is to ask your members where they are planning on going walking this week to start a discussion.

Boosting or promoting posts
Throughout using Facebook you will see constant options to "Boost" a post or promote your page. Boosting a post lets you pay Facebook to put your post in the newsfeed of not just everyone who follows your page (instead of a percentage), but also all their friends' newsfeeds too.

The idea is that if someone follows your page, they likely have friends with similar interests and so showing your post to all your follower's friends too may result in you getting more page likes.

So - should you do it? Well, Facebook offers a lot of different routes for paid advertising, and you should consider it in the same way that you would pay for any advertising for your group (such as in newspapers etc). We won't go into the options for advertising on Facebook here, but you should be aware that the opportunity is there, as many Facebook pages are initially built on the back of paid Facebook averting.

If you want to dig a little deeper, go to your group Facebook page (signed in as your group) and in the bottom right hand under each post is the option to "boost" or promote it. Clicking on this button will show you the projected statistics for paying to have this post inserted into people's newsfeeds. It will give you an estimated reach and also options for selecting different budgets.

Advertising in Facebook is always budget-led, so once your promotion reaches the maximum budget you have selected it will stop. You can play around with different budgets, and see that for pages with fewer followers you might be able to promote your page to several thousand people for less than £10.

There is also the option to target specific demographics with a Facebook advert. For example you could pay to show either a post or a specifically created advert to just people who live in your area who have listed "walking" as a past time.

Security

One question that is often raised by people who don't use Facebook is about how secure and private it is. The media haven't helped by sensationalising stories about people's accounts getting hacked and personal details stolen. The reality is that a lot of money goes into making Facebook secure, but it is part of the Internet and by default "public".

You can make your group page a private "invite-only" page, but it will seriously hamper the number of people you will attract to your page and mean that people won't be able to find your page by themselves. It rather defeats the object of "social" media.

As with all online accounts, you should keep your password safe and secure. Instead of using a simple password, use random numbers and letters – of if you need to make it something that people can remember, use a system where you have both capital letters, and replace some letters with numbers such as "k1rkleesRAmb1er5".

If you find that someone is posting as you on Facebook, or you think someone has got into your account, simply changing the password will stop them. It is rare that this happens, and when it does it can usually be traced back to a virus on your own computer that has captured your password as you have entered it – so keeping your computer virus checker up to date and running regular weekly scans will prevent this.

About the author of this guide

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Dave runs a number of Facebook pages, both for business and organisations, including the Ramblers Yorkshire page at www.facebook.com/RamblersYorkshire