Guide to Twitter

Twitter is a really useful tool for campaigners. It's a fast-track way of bringing like-minded people together, helping us make contacts with others who share our interests and campaign objectives – wherever they are in the world.

It's also a great way of discussing events, sharing ideas and making plans. And because it updates all the time, things can move far more quickly.

What is Twitter?

Twitter is a social media platform that allows you to set up your own profile that you can use to publish short messages ('tweets') - a maximum of 280 characters long.

Most people who use Twitter do so publicly. That means that everyone can see their tweets, which is what Twitter thrives on - open discussion. You can tailor who you see tweets from and what shows on your timeline by 'following' people and hashtags.

Follow people

The main way you can filter what tweets you see is by 'following' specific people, groups or organisations. By following them, these accounts' tweets will show up in your 'timeline'. And of course, people can follow you, too!

But how do you know who to follow? Well… follow other Local Groups and @LivingStreets, of course. Also think about local contacts and partners to follow, such as councillors, MPs and partner organisations.

Searches

Just as important as the people you follow are the searches you make. Hashtags can help link topics and themes, so when you search for a specific hashtag, you will see everyone else who is tweeting on the subject.

The more people using a certain hashtag, the easier it is for other users to see your posts and this will make the content you produce more useful in helping you build relationships.

Some of the hashtags we use at Living Streets (and which we need you as a Local Groups to also use), include: #NationalWalkingMonth #WalkThisMay #WalkToSchool #BanPavementParking #CutTheClutter

Setting up your account

For this you will need:

A username - if you are representing a Local Group, please use LStreets(name of group) as the username i.e. @LStreetsCardiff.

A profile picture and header - if you are representing a Local Group, your profile picture should be the square Living Streets local group logo (ask your Engagement Manager for this). Use a positive and inspiring image of a local street scene as your header photo.

A short biography - this is so people who find you on Twitter know who you are and what to expect from your tweets. This can be as literal or abstract as you like but remember that this is what will make the first impression on potential new followers. Add a link here to your Living Streets webpage, blog, other social media platforms or email address.

This is a good example: https://.twitter.com/lstreetsbristol

You can see here that Bristol LS have a pinned tweet – this means that the tweet will always show at the top of their timeline, a great way to make sure that people read the most important information first.

To pin a tweet, go to the tweet you want to pin. Click the three dots in the top right corner and select 'pin to your profile'. You can change this at any time.
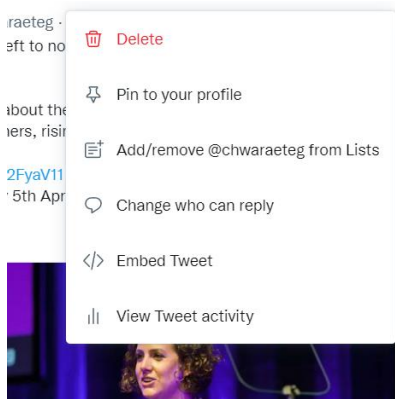
Tone of voice

How you say something is just as important as what you say on Twitter. It is important to be respectful and avoid swearing and slang. Take a look at Living Streets Twitter for inspiration.

The tone of voice we employ from our main Living Streets account seeks to reflect our inclusive, positive and dynamic personality.

1. Inclusive: We are the experts but we are also part of a growing movement of people walking. Instead of "us" and "them", let's use "we". Involve your audience with what you're saying. Be aware of different levels of ability when suggesting activities or planning events.

2. Positive and encouraging: Focus on solutions rather than getting bogged down in the problems. Avoid sounding preachy or judgmental and don't appeal to people's guilt to induce change. Instead, use encouraging language and ideas to motivate your audience.

You can of course challenge local decisions, schemes etc, but please make sure you are solutions focused, and that you praise the positives of any schemes. Social media can encourage users to be quickly reactive, make sure you know the background to anything you reply to, and do ensure you make contact with people outside of Twitter in a positive, supportive to maximise campaign success.

3. Dynamic: We are an organisation on the move. Our writing should embody the spirit of walking and feel purposeful - having a sense of movement. Choose words that urge action and inspire your audience. Let your passion come through in your writing.

4. Clear, simple, succinct: Clarity is a prerequisite for understanding. Keep your message quick, straightforward, and direct. Check your writing for any unnecessary repetition and eliminate it. No need to complicate or create detailed explanations. Never use ten words when five will do.

5. Expert, authoritative: Use one or two carefully chosen facts to drive home your message when appropriate. Your writing should sound confident and assured, without being stuffy or fact heavy.

Start tweeting!

You can tweet your own messages, by clicking the large Tweet button in blue.
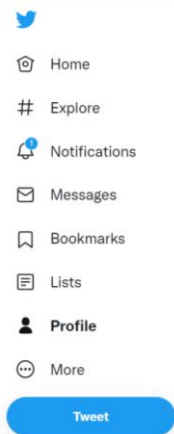
- **Resources**

You can link out to Living Streets resources and images, which you can access via this page: https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/localgroupresources

If you're using your own images, you must ensure you have permission from whoever is in them.

Retweeting

You can respond to tweets by hovering over them and selecting 'Reply', 'Like' or 'Retweet' if you agree with a comment and wish to share it with your own followers.

Quote tweet allows you to RT the quote and add in your comment e.g. "This is an excellent article about climate change and pollution, have a read".

Tagging and interacting with other users

Notifications will tell you when another profile has interacted with yours by adding a little blue bubble with the number of notifications you have.

'Tweets' shows your tweets and 'Tweets and replies' show the tweets you've sent, RT'd and the replies you have sent.

To tag an account you need to use their username which always begins with an @ sign. If you wanted to tag Living Streets it would be @LivingStreets.

However, note that if you start a tweet with an @ sign, the tweet will only be seen by that person/account and people who follow both of you.
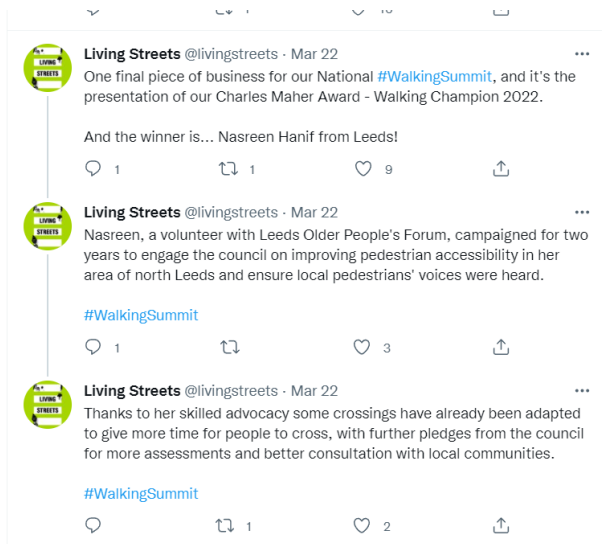

Share

You can share tweets by clicking the 'share' button. This will send a link to the tweet directly to a person's Twitter inbox but will not show publicly. It is a good way to ensure someone has seen a tweet that you think might be of interest to them. You can also use it to share your own tweets and encourage people to RT etc.

Threads

A great way of presenting a lot of information in a bitesize and readable way is by using a thread. It's a way of joining up tweets. It will look like this:

Living Streets @livingstreets · Mar 22
One final piece of business for our National #WalkingSummit, and it's the presentation of our Charles Maher Award - Walking Champion 2022.

And the winner is... Nasreen Hanif from Leeds!

💬 1   🔁 1   ♡ 9   ↑

Living Streets @livingstreets · Mar 22
Nasreen, a volunteer with Leeds Older People's Forum, campaigned for two years to engage the council on improving pedestrian accessibility in her area of north Leeds and ensure local pedestrians' voices were heard.

#WalkingSummit

💬 1   🔁   ♡ 3   ↑

Living Streets @livingstreets · Mar 22
Thanks to her skilled advocacy some crossings have already been adapted to give more time for people to cross, with further pledges from the council for more assessments and better consultation with local communities.

#WalkingSummit

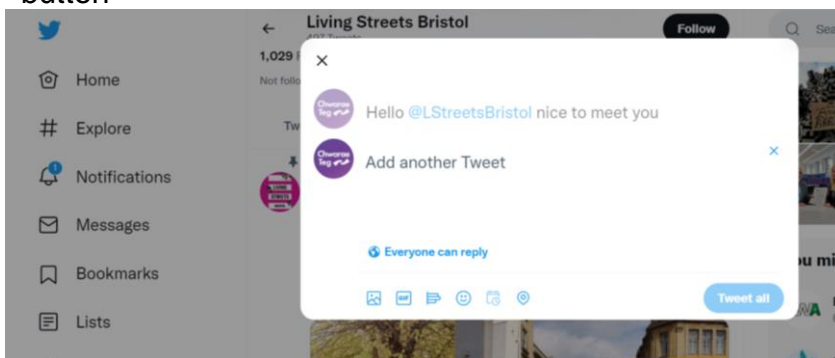💬   🔁 1   ♡ 2   ↑

How to do a thread:

1. Write your tweet and then click the + button next to the blue tweet button

2. Add in more content and you can keep going and then press the blue 'tweet all' button


Accessibility

Being accessible and inclusive is extremely important and this applies to how we communicate online. Top tips:

- Add alt text to all graphics and images.

When you add an image, make sure you add 'alt text' so that those who use screen readers know what the image is. You do this by clicking 'edit image description' after you've added the image then describing the image clearly in the text box.
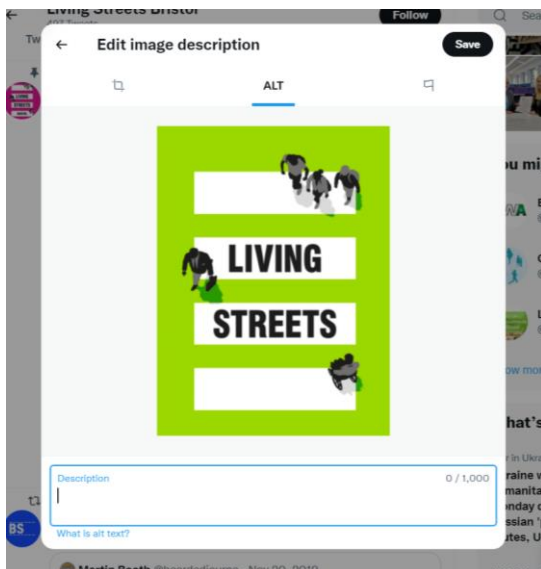
- Write in sentence case (instead of all caps or all lowercase).
- Use capital letters at the start of each word on hashtags – this is called 'camel case' (ThisIsCamelCase. Thisisnot.)
- Break up large blocks of text with line breaks.
- Don't repeat the same emoji more than 2-3 times and place them at the end of a sentence.
- Avoid using emojis in your display name.
- Upload a caption file with videos to ensure high-quality, correct captions or use third-party apps and tools to create caption (https://www.kapwing.com/subtitles).
- Avoid special characters. If posting ASCII art, post an image of the art and write an image description of it.
- Avoid using no standard symbols like mathematical symbols as a replacement for words and messages as they confuse screen readers.

- <u>Don't use ableist language.</u>
- Ensure key messages are included in post copy as well as a graphic
- Is there representation of disabled people? Consider the people in your area and reflect them in images that you share if possible. Ask permission of any members of your group if they are in images.

What should you post?

Think about the type of people that are in your group and who you would like to attract – what motivates them? What do they care about?

A good rule is 80/20 - share 80% of other people's content vs 20% of your own.

You can post photos of things you spot when out walking/wheeling, details of local events or even videos you've created to explain a project your group is working on. Be inspired by what you see other people do and have fun.

Frequency

It's good to be consistent with your content, make sure you can post regularly but be realistic. It is fine not to post every day but maybe set yourself a goal of three or four times a week.

Timeline

Your timeline will be full of other people's content and is a great place to start when deciding what to post. If you have followed the right people, you will be inundated with information that your followers will be interested in.

Living Streets

Look on our website and Twitter for links to our campaign pages, news and blog articles. Our newsletters should provide inspiration too and remember you can contact us with any news that your group has.

Themes/topics

There are masses of content available on climate change, the environment and other topics you and your followers will be interested in. Articles, podcasts, authors, books and blogs are great ways of exploring what is important to you.

Engagement

Your content doesn't have to all be static – ask questions, add polls and try and start conversations.

Online harassment

Not everything you see or the people you hear from maybe positive. You may experience harassment when communicating online, here is <u>our guide about how to deal with it</u>.

Come up against any problems?
Contact us on <u>localgroups@livingstreets.org.uk</u> and we'll see what we can do to help.