

PARLIAMENT'S CORPORATE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

POLICY ON USE OF PARLIAMENT-SPONSORED SOCIAL MEDIA

PARLIAMENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The Parliament website is the default home for all Parliament web content but sometimes there are better ways to meet the communication and engagement objectives of both Houses by providing content elsewhere.

In fact it is beneficial for us to use tools and channels that are hosted on existing social media sites. Parliament has several official (Parliament-branded) social media channels on social media sites including Twitter, Flickr, YouTube and Facebook.

From time to time we will also need to create a new Parliament-branded channel or tool using an existing social media site in order to take advantage of new engagement opportunities.

ROLE OF THE PARLIAMENT WEB & INTRANET SERVICE

The Parliament Web & Intranet Service (WIS) is responsible for all Parliament online content. Staff who are considering establishing a new Parliament-branded social media channel need to consult the WIS in advance. This is because the WIS have a responsibility to Parliament to:

- Leverage existing followers and fans by harnessing Parliament's presence on social media sites;
- integrate on and off-platform content as seamlessly as possible;
- maintain the Parliament's online brand;
- be accountable for all Parliament web content; and
- communicate Parliament's online and social media policies, and ensure that they are followed.

The WIS provides help, advice, promotion and digital expertise, to ensure that Parliament staff can make the most of social media opportunities.

PARLIAMENT'S CORPORATE SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

The WIS maintains four corporate social media accounts/channels on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr and YouTube.

General principles are:

- The WIS manage all official Parliament social media accounts;
- To increase security around these social media channels, only WIS staff have access to account passwords, which are changed regularly; Sections/individuals can create content for these channels but to ensure consistency, editorial balance and quality only WIS staff can post the content on the relevant social media channel;
- Sections/individuals should not set up official Parliament social media accounts without first consulting the WIS and their Head of Section (see Annex 1 social media questionnaire);
- The launch of a new Parliament-branded social media account must have the backing of the relevant Head of Section and have been agreed by the Web & Intranet Service;
- A balance must be maintained between Commons and Lords items; and
- Where possible links should be made back to the Parliament website or Parliament's other corporate social media channels.

USE OF PARLIAMENT'S CORPORATE TWITTER ACCOUNT

<http://twitter.com/UKParliament>

Content on the UK Parliament Twitter account includes a digest of news featured on the Parliament website, links to other Parliament social media content (new Flickr sets and YouTube films), responses to questions from the public received via Twitter and coverage of special parliamentary events such as State Opening. The account aims to promote the work of Parliament to the increasing number of UK citizens engaging with politics on Twitter.

- The Web & Intranet Service are responsible for sourcing and publishing tweets, coordinating replies to incoming messages and monitoring the account.
- The provision of content will require input from Parliament communications teams. For example the Commons Media Office for Commons content and the Lords Information Office for Lords content. WIS will work with the relevant communications teams to select web content to promote via the corporate Twitter account.
- If questions received from public users via Twitter cannot be answered through information found on the Parliament website, the HCIO and HLIO are consulted about an appropriate response.
- Tweets include hash tag keywords deemed useful and appropriate.
- Links are shortened by WIS using the bit.ly URL shortening tool.

USE OF PARLIAMENT'S CORPORATE FACEBOOK PAGE

<http://en-gb.facebook.com/pages/UK-Parliament/16553417732>

The Facebook page represents Parliament the institution and is not the place to go to find out what's happening in Parliament (that is for the Parliament website to do). This means that events, projects, exhibitions, new services, roles, processes, history and

ways to get involved with Parliament are featured rather than core business information such as debates, committee reports and evidence sessions.

- The Web & Intranet Service are responsible for sourcing and publishing wall posts to the Parliament Facebook page, coordinating replies to incoming messages and monitoring the account.
- Posts to the Parliament Facebook page wall are almost exclusively taken from highlights from the Parliament website homepage. They therefore tie into the editorial processes relating to homepage highlights.
- The content of additional posts to the wall will be agreed with the communications teams and sections wishing to promote content on the page.
- If questions received from public users via Facebook cannot be answered through information found on the Parliament website, the HCIO and HLIO will be consulted about an appropriate response. The WIS team will not engage in conversations with the public via Facebook (beyond answering questions) without clearance from the relevant communications team.
- Wall posts will always link back to content on the Parliament website or content on Parliament's other corporate social media channels.

SECTION/CAMPAIGN-SPECIFIC TWITTER AND FACEBOOK ACCOUNTS

While the WIS aims to avoid diluting the corporate Twitter channel or Facebook page, it will occasionally be more appropriate for a particular campaign or section to have its own Twitter or Facebook account.

A separate Twitter account should be considered when the subject matter is niche or specialist (i.e. of limited interest to the bulk of our followers) or when it is aimed at a specific target audience such as teachers, or when there is a need for a distinctive voice, e.g. 'The Lords of the Blog'. For example the <http://twitter.com/ukparleducation> account has been set up to tailor education-specific Parliament content for a teacher/education sector audience.

Effectively maintaining a long-term presence on Facebook can be labour-intensive, often requiring as much work as effectively maintaining a website or a blog. Therefore setting up and maintaining an official Facebook page for a project or section must be carefully considered.

Individuals and sections wishing to set up an official Parliament-branded Twitter or Facebook account should first consult WIS to discuss the proposal (see Annex 1 social media questionnaire).

The launch of a new Parliament-branded social media account must have the backing of the relevant Head of Section and in cases where views differ regarding the need for an additional Twitter or Facebook account the Web & Intranet Policy Board will make the final decision.

USE OF PARLIAMENT'S CORPORATE FLICKR CHANNEL

http://www.flickr.com/photos/uk_parliament

Parliament's Flickr channel promotes and communicates the work, history, events and architectural heritage of Parliament. The channel aims to visually convey the intensity and variety of activity associated with the buildings and the people who work here, as well as activity away from Westminster. The Parliament channel aims to engage with the large number of online users who interact with images via Flickr. This policy takes into account the Parliament-wide image policy that the Group on Information for the Public (GIP) has approved.

The channel seeks to utilise staff's special parliamentary access and knowledge to give the public insight into the institution. This 'behind the scenes' access can help to present Parliament as open and transparent.

Parliament's Flickr channel is divided into 4 main sub-categories/galleries – Parliament Buildings, Work of Parliament, History of Parliament and Parliament Events. New sets are then created within these galleries.

The Web & Intranet Service welcome photographs by staff for inclusion on the Parliament Flickr channel. These photographs should represent aspects of Parliament that are deemed to have potentially broader public interest.

USE OF PARLIAMENT'S CORPORATE YOUTUBE CHANNEL

<http://www.youtube.com/UKParliament>

YouTube films can be used to promote the work and role of Parliament to a wider online audience. Films on the corporate YouTube channel should support the communication and public engagement strategy for the Commons and Lords, reflecting each House's core business objectives.

Films are posted to the UK Parliament YouTube channel and can also be embedded directly into the Parliament website.

The Web & Intranet Service are enthusiastic about creating the highest possible quality video and audio content for the web and can support individuals and sections in developing film projects.

WIS can supply equipment and filming/editing expertise to assist teams/sections in putting together their own films. Films developed in conjunction with external production companies can also be posted on the Parliament YouTube channel.

Staff wishing to make their own YouTube film should first contact WIS to discuss the proposal and work on a film brief (see Annex 2) that will set out the film's key objectives. Once the film proposal and brief are agreed the necessary filming and editing requirements can be determined.

The sign-off process is determined at the film brief stage. YouTube films will only be made public on the Parliament YouTube channel once sign-off has been received from all specified stakeholders.

See Annex 3 for more detailed guidance on the use of Parliament's corporate social media channels

ANNEX 1

SOCIAL MEDIA QUESTIONNAIRE

The Web & Intranet Service (WIS) will work with colleagues across Parliament to develop the best tool for their objectives. Before completing, discuss your idea with the WIS who will help identify if it's the best tool for the job.

Please answer a few questions. We will:

1. Allocate someone from the web team to support you with your request
 2. Equip you with the expertise to use your online product successfully
- Name
 - Role
 - Department/Section
 - What social media tool would you like to use? (video e.g. YouTube, photo e.g. Flickr, blogging, micro blogging e.g. Twitter, social network e.g. Facebook, collaboration e.g. Ning, audio e.g. podcasts or other)
 - Please describe what you want to do with this social media tool?
 - Who is your target audience?
 - How will the content help/benefit the audience?
 - How does this tool support strategic objectives (POST/DIS/House of Lords)?
 - Do you have the resource to make regular contributions and if so how regularly will you contribute?
 - Can you commit to publish, monitor, moderate and respond to comments?
 - How will you measure success of the tool? e.g. trackable links between tool and site/ number of fans, subscribers, followers/ Site stat analysis/ Question users of the tool
 - What are the risks of setting up and running this?

Please confirm that you have sought permission from your head of section to use social media in this capacity and confirm their support and responsibility for content published on this channel.

ANNEX 2

YOUTUBE FILM BRIEF

<p>Brief</p> <p>What you expect to see in the final film?</p> <p>For example: 'Film of the Chair introducing the committee report to camera, intercut with footage of his/her recent visit to Iraq.'</p>	
<p>Objectives</p> <p>Which departmental and Parliament wide objectives does this film meet?</p>	
<p>Key messages</p> <p>Please list the key messages you expect to see in the film.</p> <p>If it is a speech/prepared transcript please include a copy</p>	
<p>Audience</p> <p>Who is this film aimed at?</p> <p>E.g. stakeholders in your policy area, technology bloggers, recent graduates.</p>	

Filming location Please confirm location as special permissions may need to be obtained	
Format: Will the film be for Broadcast or web only?	
Date and time of filming Please given plenty of lead time so we can ensure resources are available	
Who is briefing the interviewee, if needed	
Contact information Please ensure there is someone who owns this piece of work and can be contacted throughout the project	
Sign-off Please indicate who needs to see the film before it is made public and any specific sign-off requirements	

ANNEX 3

TWITTER CONTENT PRINCIPLES

Content for our Twitter channel is:

Varied: The channel will cover a broad base of content types and sources to retain interest levels. A balance between Commons and Lords content is maintained.

Human: Twitter users can be hostile to the over-use of automation (such as generating Twitter content entirely from RSS feeds) and to re-gurgitation of press release headlines. While corporate in message, the tone of our Twitter channel must therefore be informal spoken English, human-edited and – for the most part - written/paraphrased specifically for the channel.

Frequent: a minimum 2 and maximum 8 tweets per working day, with a minimum gap of 30 minutes between tweets to avoid flooding our followers' Twitter streams. (Not counting @replies to other Twitter users, or live coverage of an event e.g. #pmqs).

Re-tweetable: to make it easy for others to re-tweet our most important announcements, we will aim to restrict tweets to 132 characters. (This allows sufficient space for "RT @UKParliament" to be included as a prefix).

Timely: Tweets are about issues of relevance today or events/opportunities coming soon.

Corporate: as an extension of the Department's corporate website, the primary communications objectives should support those of the Parliament website.

FACEBOOK CONTENT PRINCIPLES

Content for our Facebook channel is:

Varied: The channel will cover a broad base of content types and sources to retain interest levels. A balance between Commons and Lords content is maintained.

Human: Facebook users can be hostile to an overly formal writing style. While corporate in message, the tone of our Facebook channel must therefore be informal spoken English, human-edited and – for the most part - written/paraphrased specifically for the channel.

Frequent: an average of 2 new wall posts a week

Re-usable: Facebook is an excellent tool for sharing online content between networks of users/friends. Posts on Parliament's Facebook wall should focus on material users are likely to want to send to friends or post on their own profile. For example event-driven material such as information about Guy Fawkes on the 5 November and the YouTube film of New Year's Eve fireworks from the top of Big Ben on 31 December.

Timely: Facebook posts are about issues of relevance today or events/opportunities coming soon.

Corporate: as an extension of the Department's corporate website, the primary communications objectives should support those of the Parliament website.

FLICKR IMAGE GUIDELINES

The main things to note:

- In terms of quality the pictures do need to be in focus.
- The person taking the photograph needs to make those having their picture taken are aware that the photograph will go on the Parliament Flickr photostream and get their agreement that this is OK. The photographer should then let us know (email) that this permission was given. They should also get their names so we can caption the images properly afterwards.
- The photographer also needs to agree to give us the images so we can assign Parliament copyright. MPs can link to them from their own sites but they will need to give Parliament the copyright.
- We also don't want huge numbers of images. It's better to have a few really good ones that really represent something relevant to the subject matter. It also helps to give the captions more of a narrative.

Before you send your images to WIS to load onto Flickr think about:

- Does the photo show people in action?
- Can the photo be linked to content on the UK Parliament website?
- Is the photo composed well?
- Is it of good quality?
- Is it too like other images in the set?
- Is the photo unique: ie not like anything already on the UK Parliament photostream?

If you answer 'no' to any of these questions there may not be value in adding image to Flickr.

PRIVACY

If you want to publish photographs that show people who can be identified, you will need permission from those people that they are happy for their photos to be published on a public website. If the photos are taken at a certain time (eg an opening of an exhibition then the photos should only be used in that context and not as library or stock photos).

If you want to use photos again to illustrate a particular scenario, for example visitors taken round the Visitors' route by a guide, then each person has to give permission allowing this or 'model-release' consent.

A group leader may be able to sign-off permission for the whole group. Schools will generally need a consent form for any child photographed but this would be organised by the school before a visit. The photographer would need to get one form or written statement from the school saying that this has been done.

Committee chairs or clerks can also get verbal agreement from committee members to photos being published but this must be set out in writing and given to the photographer before images can be published.

At a public event, the event organisers should advise guests in advance that photos will be taken and to let organisers know if they do not want photos taken or published on the Parliament intranet or website.

RIGHTS AND LICENSES

Parliament should own the copyright to any pictures you load onto Flickr. That means it should have been taken by a Parliament staffer or someone paid by us who has signed copyright over to us.

If you are unsure of the status of photographs taken by someone else, you should ask them before you put them on Flickr. Photos from image stocks such as iStock or PA should **NEVER** be placed on the Flickr stream.

Our default settings are that anyone can use the photos on our stream – we encourage them to do so. Our default is to tag images using Flickr's Creative Commons licence:

<http://creativecommons.org/about/licenses>

This means others can share (copy, distribute and transmit) images but must:

- attribute the work in the manner specified by the author or licensor, in our case assign parliament copyright (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work)
- not use this work for commercial purposes
- not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

The Web & Intranet Service can change the rights settings of individual photos or sets to 'all rights reserved' if necessary

TITLES AND DESCRIPTIONS

Every photo should have a meaningful title and description:

You must include:

- the name(s) of the person/people in the photo
- their location
- what they are doing – use an active verb like helping, assisting, attending
- why they are there - what is the purpose of the event/ visit/ activity
- the URL of the relevant UK Parliament content

TAGGING

Tagging is very important - it means people who are searching for images on particular things will be able to find ours.

Tag photos with:

- names of people in the photo (tag first name and surname separately)
- job titles
- location (ie where it is happening: inside Parliament or on the Estate)
- name of visit/ event/ programme/conservation project/workshop/tour, if relevant
- for our standard tags and anything else which might be relevant.

SETS AND COLLECTIONS

All photos should be added to a set AND a collection.

REMEMBER: You can add pictures to more than one set or collection if appropriate.

Sets can be created for all sort of content for example an event or visit. The number of images in a set can vary but the rough rule of thumb is that, unless the subject matter/image is really striking and appeals to a largish audience, then you should probably plan for a maximum of 15/20 images.

If, for instance, it is conservation work with new images being added frequently as the work progresses, you should consider taking down the earlier ones as you go, although retaining some 'before' pictures can be visually very effective.

QUALITY OF IMAGES

Please make sure the quality of your images is high and in particular that the lighting good. For example you should probably reject and not use an image if the details are difficult to make out because the lighting is poor.

Each image should be as interesting as possible in its own right, even if is part of a set.

Make sure your images are not repetitious.

YOUTUBE FILMING

Members of the WIS team can assist and advise on filming techniques and loan out equipment to staff after appropriate training. If the film project is registered as a high priority the WIS team can undertake filming themselves.

Lighting

WIS do not possess a lighting rig and do not have staff professionally trained in film lighting. The venue in question will have to be naturally lit or particularly well lit artificially. If the lighting quality in the venue is in doubt, a representative from WIS will inspect the venue prior to the date of filming. If the light is not deemed suitable to produce an adequate recording, WIS will require the commissioners of the film to find a more suitable venue.

Sound

Audio quality is vital to a high quality film. One of the potential audio pitfalls is selecting an inappropriate venue. For example areas of the palace which are particularly busy, with an increased level of background noise. If the audio quality in the venue is in doubt, a representative from the team will inspect the venue prior to the date of filming and assess its suitability. If the light is not deemed suitable to produce an adequate recording, WIS will require the commissioners of the film to find a more suitable venue.

Length

Films on YouTube should ideally be limited to around 10 minutes in length. Successful YouTube films tend to be short (around 3 minutes in length).

EDITING

Members of the WIS team can provide a basic edit of a YouTube film using the editing software Final Cut Pro. If the film requires considerable editing due to its poor quality (e.g. poor lighting/sound) a decision will be made by the Head of WIS and the relevant Head of Section whether the film should be included on the Parliament YouTube channel and whether the necessary WIS resources are allocated to edit the film.