

Basic guide to facebook

The purpose of this guide is to give you a basic introduction to what facebook is, the benefits, and some basic precautions. It is based on my experience of using facebook and setting up facebook for friends and family.

It is expected that organisations will have a facebook page, as well as a website. Some of the visitors to the C&T day learned of the event via facebook.

Why use facebook?

I use facebook as it saves me time keeping in contact with friends and family, and I also automatically receive updates/news from the Hickling windsurfing club facebook pages. All our family use facebook, our children work in London and Edinburgh, so it's particularly useful for keeping track and sharing what they're up to, both for my benefit, and also for other family members who do not get to see them very often.

Should you use facebook? That's a personal question for you to decide, but what have you got to lose, and if it doesn't work for you then you can always remove all your facebook pages. Virtually everyone under 30 years of age, and about a third of Hickling members use Facebook. A further third said they would be prepared to give it a go.

What is it?

All facebook members effectively have a webpage (timeline) where they can add updates about themselves. E.g. holidays, family photos, etc. but the key feature is that you decide who to share the information with (usually your "friends"). The HWC facebook page includes news, updates, events, and photos which will automatically be visible to those who have 'liked' HWC facebook page.

It's possible to acknowledge someone's update by "liking" (thumbs up symbol), or adding a comment. It's this that makes it interactive. Have a look at the recent come and try day update on the club facebook page (the link is on our website). This enabled the club to quickly publish photos from the event, add a brief description, and allowed others to make comments about the day. This is a very efficient communication method, as the information would have been cascaded to those that have "liked" the HWC and anyone they choose to share their pages with. The C&T day post was cascaded automatically to about 350 people!

The main features of Facebook are:



1. 'News feed' page. I find this the most useful, as updates from my friends are automatically presented on a single view, and of course, updates on the Hickling windsurfing club facebook appear here too.

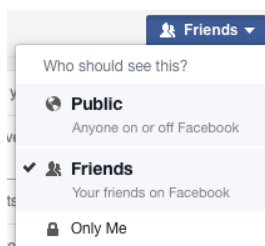
Here is what the training day post looked like on my 'news feed'.



2. Posts on my facebook page. I use facebook about 10 times a year just to update my facebook page with key things happening in the family (e.g. holidays, updates from the children) sharing photos. This is what my facebook page looks like.

3. A private message function, which I don't use very often.

Who to share your facebook page with?



The facebook pages can be set up to be shared either by everyone, friends of friends, friends, or even just oneself. None of my friends or I have had any issues with using facebook. The important point here is being careful about what information to share in the first place.

We have all heard stories from the press of advertising house parties, admitting traffic offences etc. with the inevitable outcomes!

Here is some key advice about using facebook, although this equally applies to being on-line generally, using emails, etc.

1. Never make inflammatory remarks or comments about anybody, even if you are joking, as your intent could be easily misinterpreted.
2. Never disclose personal information, e.g. your address, date of birth, bank details, medical information.
3. Facebook sign up process. Some information is mandatory for the sign up process. E.g. your name, email address (you need this for logging in), and date of birth. I choose to provide an incorrect date of birth, just to be on the safe side. Facebook also asked for lots of voluntary information, where I went to school, who I work for, favourite music, favourite football team, et cetera. I just skipped all these steps.

In short, only make comments, and share information that you would be happy for anybody to see. Even though you may restrict information to friends, there is always a small risk that one of your friends may inadvertently share your post with others they didn't mean to. It's easier to sleep at night knowing that if the worst happens, there is nothing on your Facebook page that would cause embarrassment or problems at a later stage.

More information.

If you need more information, or have any questions then in the first instance Google it. If you wish to discuss anything then feel free to drop me a line.

Please note this guide is based on my experience, and neither myself or Hickling windsurfing club can take responsibility for your use of Facebook.

Setting up your facebook pages

1. Register your email address with Facebook. Enter basic information, pick a password, 'choose' your date of birth (see note above). Skip non-essential information, your address, who you work for, music tastes, etc.
2. Find your 'friends'. Search for their name or email address. Send an invitation to be a friend.
3. Decide who to share your facebook pages with (perhaps just friends initially).
4. Add a picture of yourself, if you wish, and a favourite picture, perhaps for your background.
5. Search for Hickling windsurfing club, and "like" the page. You will then receive updates from the HWC facebook page (don't like the page if you don't want the updates), although you can change all this later.

HWC facebook pages. Please note the HWC Facebook page is set up slightly differently to personal Facebook pages. It set up on the basis of a business, therefore it's similar to our website in that anybody can look at it. Although, as I've said before you can control who can see *your* facebook page.

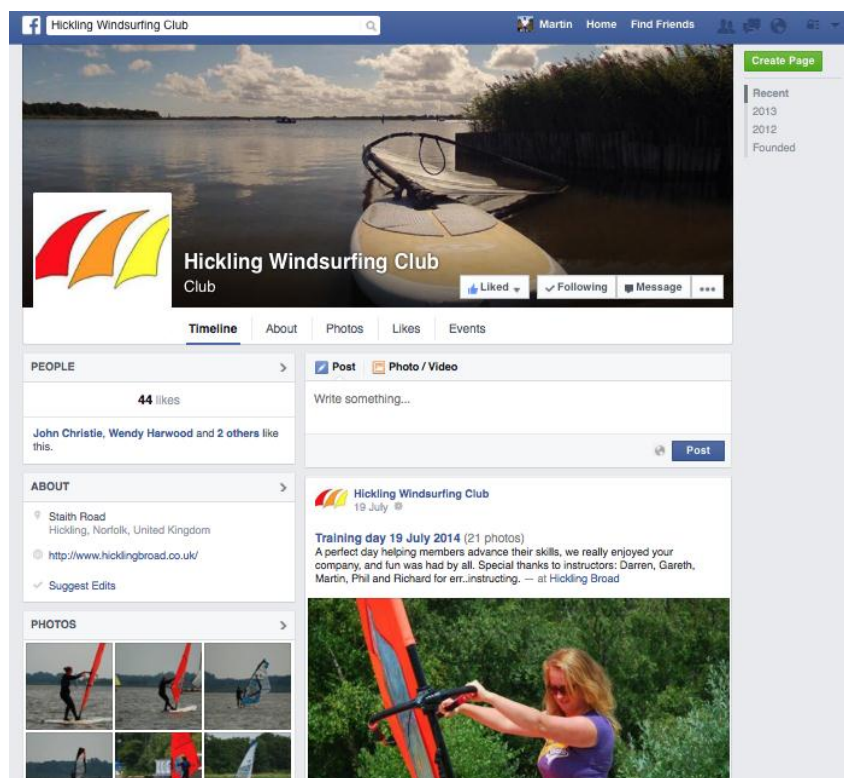
To sum up:

It's very easy to engage with 'friends' in an informal way and see what's going on in their lives.

A great way to keep up to date with the Club.

This doesn't replace the HWC web site. The web site is closely controlled and a great source of information – you know where it is and it's in a logical order. In contrast, the HWC facebook page is excellent for being social, two way communications, and is largely uncontrolled. It helps members to feel they are engaged without necessarily being at the event, pub etc. Please try it, and give me a call if you wish.

Martin



The HWC facebook page.

Anyone can look at the page without being a facebook user.

Only facebook users can receive automatic updates.

Only facebook users can make comments, add posts, or see comments to posts submitted by other users.

The facebook administrator (me) can remove posts etc.