Getting started with social media:
A brief guide for Friends of Library Groups

These are just some suggestions. There is also a guide for friends groups to send content to Bristol Libraries to post on our social media accounts, on the Friends' webpage: https://www.bristol.gov.uk/libraries-archives/friends-groups-of-our-libraries

Facebook

What is it useful for?
- A Facebook Page can work in place of a website: it can be a go-to place for people to see who you are and what you're up to
- It's useful for promoting events
- If you only use one Social Media platform, Facebook is the best place to start

What you will need to set up an account?
- Everyone who would like to contribute sets up an individual account in your own name. You will need basic info e.g. email address.
- Then one of those people sets up a Page in the name of the Friends group as the editor, and invites the others to be administrators

What sort of thing do you post on there?
- Events (set up as an Event, rather than just a normal post)
- Upcoming activities you would like to promote; achievements you would like to celebrate (+ ideally content that you think would be entertaining or of interest to your audience, or reposting content from friendly organisations)
- Promote your upcoming events on other Pages that might be read by your audience, such as "Things to Do With Kids In & Around Bristol" or "The Mead BS10"

General tips
- Always aim to post both a picture and words, to make it appealing and accessible. If you are using pictures from the Internet, make sure they are high-quality, so the pictures don't appear blurry
- Facebook Messenger can be a way to contact people
- Invite, Follow etc. to build your readership
- Aim to post at least monthly, preferably more
- Use the 'Schedule Post' tool to set up several posts at once, ahead of time

Twitter

What is it useful for?
- Promoting and celebrating activities in a more informal way

What you will need to set up an account
- Set up one account for your group by using one email address and a password

What sort of thing do you post on there?

- Short posts (image and words)

What the ##@# is a Hashtag?

- Use Hashtags in your post (e.g. #WhitchurchLibrary or #EarthDay2020) so that your message shows up in searches for that Hashtag
- Don't over hashtag - research shows engagements increases when using just one hashtag
- Use other people's Twitter handles (e.g. @BristolLibrary or @upourstreet) as a way of getting those people to read and possibly Retweet your post

General tips

- Aim to post weekly, or even more
- Twitter is more immediate than Facebook – for example, Tweet on your phone about an event while you are at it. This is called 'live-tweeting'
- It's also short-lived – a tweet disappears quickly – so it's ok to repeat content
- It's good etiquette to like and retweet other relevant posts. This will make people more likely to see your page (which increases the likelihood they will follow you and read what you're posting!)
- Use the 'Schedule Post' tool to set up several posts at once, ahead of time, on Tweetdeck (https://tweetdeck.twitter.com/) or Hootsuite (www.hootsuite.com)
- You can also use Tweetdeck or Hootsuite to set up searches on relevant content/hashtags that you can retweet or engage with (such as #libraries #bristollibraries or #librarytips)

Instagram

What is it useful for?

- Posting intriguing or pleasing images that promote or celebrate the group. You should add a text caption, which will show underneath the image
- Note that, unlike Twitter or Facebook, you can only post on Instagram using a handheld device, not a PC or laptop. Nor can you schedule posts. It's more of an 'out and about' platform
- As well as Posts, you can also post 'Stories', which are generally a picture with some text over it only last a day/24 hours (unless you 'Pin' them)

What you will need to set up an account

- As with Twitter, set up one account for your group

What sort of thing do you post on there?

- Promote upcoming activities
- Photos from activities
- Photos of attractive things e.g. book displays or hanging baskets

General tips

- As with Twitter, use #hashtags and @handles to reach more people

- Unlike Facebook & Twitter, you can't repost
- Try to keep a cohesive aesthetic
- It's good etiquette to follow, like & comment on other people's posts
- Aim to post weekly, or even more

General tips for all social media:

- Look at what others are doing well and copy it (other community groups, other friends groups, other libraries)
- Piggyback on local and national events, holidays or topical content, for example, #librariesweek that CILIP run during October or national reading weeks, etc.

Choosing images for designs and social media:

- If possible, always reference the photographer. Check the creative commons licence
- If you want a photo to use on something that you'll be selling or distributing physically (e.g., T-shirts, mugs, or posters), you will likely need a commercial license. Royalty-free images aren't for putting on T-shirts to sell. Double check the usage conditions before you print and sell anything.
- Get out your thesaurus (or your favourite dictionary app), and make a list of synonyms for your key search terms. Photosites aren't cataloged as well as libraries, and the way a photo of a book is tagged on one site may have little to do with how a similar (or even the exact same) photo is tagged on another site.
- When selecting stock photos for a project, think beyond images that are directly representational. It's OK to use more artsy shots.
- Some places to find royalty free images:
    - https://unsplash.com
    - https://pixabay.com
    - https://freephotos.cc

Other online tools that may be useful to the group

- **Canva** – a very useful website with hundreds of templates in different shapes, for designing posters or social media images. You will need to set up an account.
- **Eventbrite** – a useful website for promoting events. While it's designed as a ticket selling platform, you can also use it for free events. You will need to set up a group account. It has a handy feature where you can put an event on here and it will create a Facebook Event for you that links through.
- **WhatsApp** – if enough people in the group have smart phones, this can be a good way to communicate between meetings. You just use your phone number.

- **Nextdoor** – an app for promoting activities locally:
  - Good for setting up events and choosing which community to show it to (just your area, or wider Bristol).
  - Like Facebook, people can say they are coming to an event and it appears in their diary. Good to post about library activity in your neighbourhood - put a call out for volunteers or ideas