

MKNHS PUBLICITY: FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM

Article by Sue Hetherington MKNHS Publicity Coordinator

This is to announce that Milton Keynes Natural History Society has taken a small step into the world of Social Media, through the establishment of Facebook and Instagram accounts.

Social media is a great way to stay in touch with family, friends and keep up to date on the latest news. It is also a great way to share common interests, such as natural history, and for us to get news about Society matters out really quickly. There are a bewildering range of Social Media applications – for example Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, WhatsApp, Novi, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Reddit, Tiktok, YouTube etc etc. There are probably a few names you recognise from that list but the Society is just using two – FACEBOOK and INSTAGRAM.

So, why have we done this? We are keen to assure members that social media is not intended to replace anything we already do. It is just an extra for those who it suits. We also feel it's a gap in what we do as a Society. As well as being an additional resource for valued current members we hope it will help us reach people we don't reach at present. We have an imbalance with our age and diversity profiles which we hope to address. Gaining additional new members is so important for planning for the succession of those who will lead the Society for hopefully years to come. We also just need to increase the number of members we have. We want to assure all of our current members that we are not planning to throw out the baby with the bathwater and all of the services we currently offer are staying just as they are.

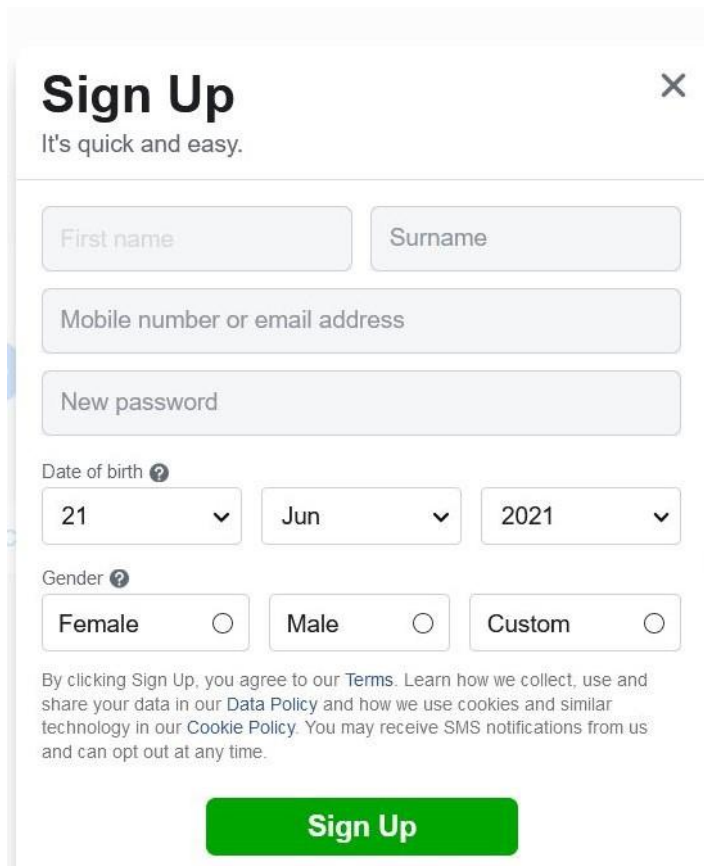
Facebook allows people to share photos, have discussions online and catch up with groups or friends. Each user has their own homepage where they can upload photos or post text or videos. Groups are also a feature, which also have their own homepages and these groups enable new connections and sharing. We have set up a group on Facebook called **MK NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**. You will need to ask to join the group once you are on Facebook. It's not a condition of joining the Facebook group that people are members of MKNHS but we hope that anyone who isn't will like what they see so much that they'll want to join the Society. Harry Appleyard, Amy Jerome and myself monitor the group and vet the applications to join, either accepting or refusing membership (not that we've had any reason to refuse anyone yet). We are also able to keep an eye on what people post and in the unlikely event that it's something unsuitable, we have the ability to remove it. People are just mostly sharing what they see when out and about in MK. They are just quick posts, it's so easy nowadays to take a quick snap with a mobile phone and share. We always encourage people to send sightings and longer pieces of writing to the main website.

The facebook page also publicises upcoming weekly Society events as does the website.

FACEBOOK can be run from the website (<https://www.facebook.com>) or as an application by downloading the app from Google or Apple. It will run on your desktop computer, laptop computer, tablet or smartphone.

Here is a quick guide to getting started on facebook :

Signing up online - <https://www.facebook.com> create your facebook account – the screen looks like this:



The image shows a screenshot of the Facebook 'Sign Up' form. At the top, it says 'Sign Up' in a large font, followed by the tagline 'It's quick and easy.' Below this, there are several input fields: 'First name' and 'Surname' (two separate boxes), 'Mobile number or email address', and 'New password'. Underneath these is the 'Date of birth' section, which consists of three dropdown menus for day (21), month (Jun), and year (2021). Below that is the 'Gender' section with three radio button options: 'Female', 'Male', and 'Custom'. At the bottom of the form, there is a green 'Sign Up' button. A small disclaimer at the bottom of the form reads: 'By clicking Sign Up, you agree to our Terms. Learn how we collect, use and share your data in our Data Policy and how we use cookies and similar technology in our Cookie Policy. You may receive SMS notifications from us and can opt out at any time.'

- Complete the details as above
- Search for **MK NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**
- Read/post messages/photos on the group
- If you post on Facebook then you are agreeing to allow Facebook to display and use your photo via a licence. You still own the photo, but Facebook can use it, unless you delete it from the site.
- It is important to manage the security and privacy settings on your Facebook account to keep information private. This is done in the settings and privacy section. To be safe, when posting anything, avoid sharing information that you would not reveal to a stranger. This isn't the place for a long piece of tuition, but if this is something that worries you, Amy, Harry or myself would be happy to help.

If you have any questions or comments, just ask me, Harry or Amy at any Society opportunity and we would be more than happy to try to help.

To date, **we grown our membership to 52 active members which is impressive considering we have not had a big launch until now.**

Turning now to **INSTAGRAM** : Two other members, Harry and Amy are dealing with aspect of publicity. It has some similarities to facebook but it's designed for photo and video sharing and news articles via mobile devices. It's really fiddly to try to use it on computers. It's particularly popular with the younger age group so you can see why it's attractive for the Society to try.

An account needs to be set up in a similar way as described for Facebook.

All posts to Instagram are accompanied by a photo and can be "liked", commented on and even shared to a "story" which lasts only 24 hours.

To find us on Instagram, download the app and search for **MK_Natural_History_Society**.

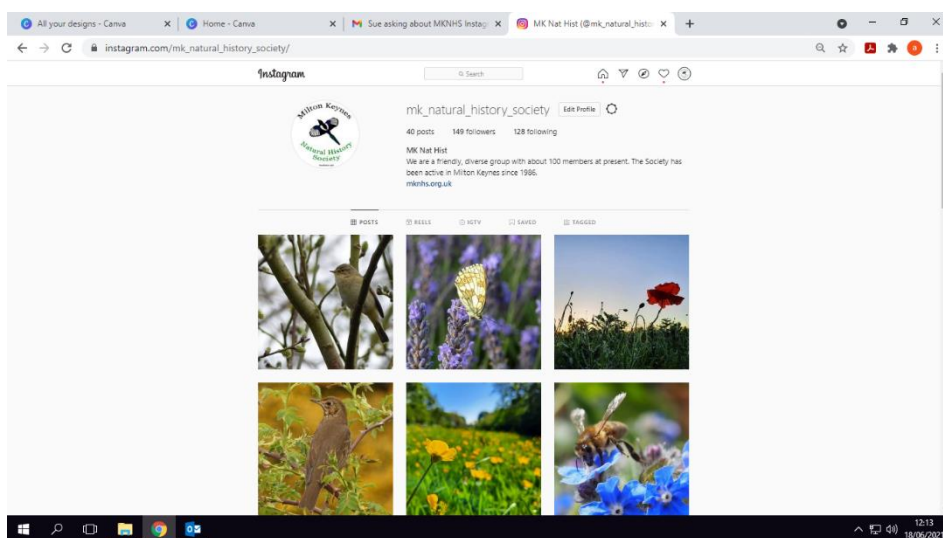
There are no closed group options, but anyone can "follow" our account and interact with us, and we can also moderate comments/direct messages etc. To date, **we have 149 followers, have made 40 posts, a handful of stories and had one membership enquiry**. We have also run interactive quizzes on our story, shared other local photographer's work, and relevant news articles.

We never post a member's photo without permission and always credit them in the caption. Instagram is also a place to use (love them or loathe them) "hashtags". On each post, we will tag relevant words such as "natural history" and "Milton Keynes" so that anyone in the world who is searching for all posts related to those words will see our pictures too.

As always, we welcome you to share your photos with us if you're happy for them to be shared on our social media.

Instagram is owned by Facebook with a similar set-up regarding rights to photographs. With all social media, if you are sharing a photo that you want to protect then you can put your name on the photo with the copyright sign which could put people off from copying and re-using.

This is a screenshot of what the instagram user sees on the MKNHS page.



We hope that more members will join the Facebook group and try Instagram.

Sue Hetherington
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