



## Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland Online Safety and Social Media Policy

Prepared by and date:	Sarah Woods, November 2024
Approved by and date:	Board of Trustees, 10 December 2024
Next review date:	December 2025 (Annual review cycle, alongside Safeguarding Policies)
The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (known as BSBI) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (8553976) and a charity registered in England and Wales (1152954) and in Scotland (SC038675). Registered office: Moore Kingston Smith LLP, 4 Beaconsfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 3RD, UK	

### Introduction

The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) is committed to using online platforms and social media channels to further our mission of supporting and encouraging amateur and professional botanists. We do this through encouraging learning, recording and an enjoyment of botany. This policy outlines guidelines and expectations for the responsible and safe use of online tools and social media by all employees, volunteers, and representatives of the BSBI.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all individuals associated with the BSBI use online platforms and social media responsibly, respectfully, professionally, and safely. It aims to protect the reputation of the Society, maintain the privacy and security of individuals, and adhere to all relevant laws and regulations.

### Related Policies

[Privacy policy](#)

Safeguarding policies - for [Adults](#); for [Children and Young people](#)

[Data handling policy](#)

### General Guidelines

#### **a. Professional Conduct**

All individuals representing the BSBI on social media, whether through an official BSBI account or a personal account, must conduct themselves professionally and in a manner that reflects the values and objectives of the Society.

#### **b. Privacy and Confidentiality**

Do not share confidential or sensitive information related to the organisation, its staff, members, donors, or volunteers, unless this information is publicly available and pertinent (e.g. to signpost to a County Recorder).

Respect the privacy of individuals and obtain their consent before posting their photos, names, or personal information on social media.

Respect the copyright of images or artwork with appropriate consent and crediting.

### **c. Compliance with Laws and Regulations**

Follow all relevant UK, Ireland and international laws, including fundraising, copyright, defamation, and data protection laws.

Report any legal concerns or violations to the appropriate authority within the Society (see below).

### **d. Respectful Communication**

Treat all individuals with respect and civility in online interactions.

Refrain from engaging in personal attacks, hate speech, discriminatory behaviour, threatening, racist, abusive, hateful, violent behaviour, or obscene language. Any prejudicial statements, comments or remarks in posts or profiles will be removed immediately. Retaliation against any person complaining of discrimination will not be tolerated.

Be confident in escalating questions around moderation, safeguarding or other issues promptly.

## **Social Media Account Management**

### **a. Ownership and Authorization**

The BSBI retains ownership of all official social media accounts.

Only authorised personnel may access and manage these accounts.

### **b. Account Security**

Strong, unique passwords will be used for all social media accounts, with two-factor authentication enabled where available.

At least two members of staff will have access to each account, with each account having a designated individual who leads on its use and is designated to monitor content.

The designated person will remove inappropriate posts, comments and messages, including direct messages. They will seek advice from our Safeguarding leads to advise on any safeguarding requirements.

### **c. Content Guidelines**

Ensure all content shared represents the organisation's values and mission. Be aware of and maintain the standards set out in the [BSBI Code of Conduct](#).

Avoid political, controversial, or divisive topics unless directly relevant to the organisation's mission.

Be aware of the likelihood and risks posed by AI generated content and refrain from sharing it onwards unless there is a specific reason to do so, and the content is labelled as such.

### **d. Monitoring and Reporting**

Regularly monitor social media accounts for comments, messages, and mentions.

Promptly report any suspicious or inappropriate activities to the designated contact person.

## **Personal Social Media Use**

Clearly distinguish between personal and professional social media accounts.

Avoid representing personal opinions as those of the BSBI.

## Training and Education

The BSBI will provide training to employees, volunteers, and representatives on the use of social media accounts and associated platforms.

Staff and volunteers should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it, and seek the advice of the BSBI Safeguarding Leads:

- Julia Hanmer, Chief Executive (+44 7757 244651 or [julia.hanmer@bsbi.org](mailto:julia.hanmer@bsbi.org))
- Jonathan Shanklin, Honorary Field Meetings Secretary (+44 1223 571250 or +44 758 648 6338 or [jdsh@bas.ac.uk](mailto:jdsh@bas.ac.uk))

and/or Communications Officer, Louise Marsh, +44 7725 862 957 or [louise.marsh@bsbi.org](mailto:louise.marsh@bsbi.org)

if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media. Any disclosure of abuse incidents or concerns occurring through social media will be dealt with in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, according to our safeguarding reporting procedures.

## Enforcement and Consequences

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary actions, up to and including termination of employment or membership, or legal consequences if violations are severe or unlawful.

## Review and Updates

This policy will be periodically reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect changes in online safety and social media best practices, as well as changes in laws and regulations.

By adhering to this Online Safety and Social Media Policy, we will maintain a positive online presence, protect our organisation's reputation, and continue to advance our mission.