

**National LAF Conference (South) 23rd February 2016, Bristol  
National LAF Conference (North) 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016, Leeds**

## **Recreational vehicles**

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**The Workshop questions** focussed on the rapidly evolving influence of social media, and its impact on communication and behaviours, with relation to recreational vehicle use.

**Q1 What experience do you have of harnessing social media to engage with people outside the traditional club structure?**

**Q2 Has social media, and the way in which it has allows informal and ad hoc association of people with common interests, eroded, or even replaced organised clubs?? If it has: who is going to fund the essential representational and legal work that most outdoor recreation organisations currently do?**

**Does social media operate a better outreach than other media because it engages and empowers people, at little cost, far more people than we could reach and influence previously? If it does how do traditional organisations make the transition to using social media, or does it remain as a bolt on to traditional operating practices?**

The resulting discussion in both sessions naturally fell into combining the first two questions about the nature and effects of social media and ideas about how to use social media.

### **Points raised in discussion re: Q's 1 and 2:**

- Are traditional groups/clubs actually declining and can they still influence non-members?. Raises question: is bad practice/undesirable behaviours confined to non-club members but traditional lines of communication are changing and with it the means by which we reach consensus and establish good and bad practice/behaviours.
- Mountain biking was mentioned several times as a pursuit that had embraced social media with positive and negative effects. Examples were given of the quick reactivity of social media in relation to advertising where to go – legally and illegally but also that enhanced communication had developed cosnesnus re: behaviours in areas such as the Peak District.
- Facebook is what we immediately think of as social media but that is already old hat to younger people and there's the danger that of always chasing your own tail unless you can keep up with it have software that can access a range of media.

- Social media is being used extensively by clubs including off roaders but also 50% will not be using it. Outside the club structure there is probably more use so if you want to get through to them you need to engage with it.
- No obvious structure on social media so no official, or easily apparent, channel of representation or responsibility you would get in a traditional club format.
- Social media and peer pressure: Good and bad sides eg the removal of constraints that face to face contact brings, larger groups come together quicker. This can lead to damaging/ excessive use of routes but it may be also easier to discover and tackle bad or illegal practice. Social media thus needs to be managed well to avoid its negative aspects.

### Question 3:

- Can do but need to look at range of SM and where and when you use it and what you want to communicate/signpost. TWITTER for example good for individual clear messages and maybe signposting people to a other info/website etc.. FB good for less formal news and discussion but can get confused.
- Social media can be an add-on to what clubs already do and a way of reaching those who may not want to join a traditional club . there are example of clubs forming on social media and then meeting traditional clubs – so a potential member source and, if it can be harnessed, the club structure and activities should survive but in a changed form.
- Use of social media can actually increase membership amongst those who may not want to engage with the traditional club structure and there are other options than Facebook or Twitter.eg on-line forums, images/graphics and messages that can be shared on a range of media etc.
- Examples from other sports include climbing/mountaineering where a large proportion of the community visit one or two online forums eg UKClimbing <http://www.ukclimbing.com/> which is also used by the British Mountaineering Council to communicate/discuss issues and news.
- Websites are still perhaps the most important /appropriate place for having a repository of information but social media can signpost people to these websites and other contacts.