



# TRAINING CARD: TWITTER



## A participatory approach to catchment management Using Twitter to communicate, share your local knowledge, generate discussions and submit your observations

### What is Twitter?

Twitter is an online social networking and blogging service that allows users to create an account for free, send 'tweets' and communicate with other users worldwide. It is a great way to hear about the latest news or subjects / topics you are interested in. See <https://twitter.com/>.

### What is a 'tweet'?

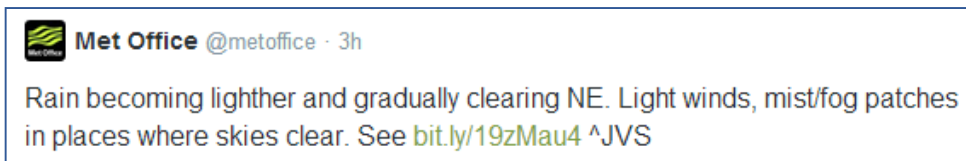
Tweets are messages submitted by Twitter users which contain up to 140 characters. This means that the message is kept short and can be submitted quickly. You can also link a photograph or video to your tweet and even link to external sites using hyperlinks. Here is an example of a tweet:



### Why do I need to use Twitter?

You can use Twitter to discover a wealth of information in the subject areas you are interested in or to keep up-to-date with what is happening in your local area. For example, you might use Twitter to:

- Receive news headlines and live traffic updates;
- Keep up-to-date and join in with discussions about your favourite sport or society;
- Keep connected with friends and relatives – share photographs and videos
- Access the latest weather forecasts. For example:



**Use Twitter to communicate** with the rest of the community, **share** local knowledge and **submit** some of your catchment observations in near real-time.



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## What do I need to do in order to start using Twitter?

You can use Twitter on your PC, smart phone or tablet. Visit <https://twitter.com/>. Here are a set of simple steps you need to take to sign up and create your own account:

Visit: <https://twitter.com/signup>

Enter your full name, email address and create a password. Choose a username for example 'AcombRiverWatch1' and Twitter will confirm whether this username is still available for use. Your first choice may be taken already.

Twitter will then email you. Verify your account by clicking on the link provided in the email from Twitter in order to activate your account.

Add your own profile picture

Add your own brief 'bio' for example 'A local resident and member of Acomb's Flood Group interested in preserving the catchment'

Ensure you have the correct date and time set – go to Settings > Time Zone > and choose GMT London

Check and set any email notifications you wish to receive – go to Settings > Email notifications > choose which options you would like (this is up to you). We recommend that you receive emails when you are mentioned in a tweet.



Follow

other Twitter users who you are interested in hearing from.

Here are some suggestions (follow @RedBurnAcomb):

@RedBurnAcomb	@riverlevel_0661	@HaltwhistleBurn
@metoffice	@HadriansWall	@EnvAgencyYNE

*You are now ready to start tweeting!*

*Tip: avoid sharing the exact location of where you live on Twitter. 'Acomb, Northumberland' is sufficient.*



## What are hashtags and why use them?

Hashtags represent key words, topics or phrases within tweets. '#' is placed at the start of the word. Twitter automatically highlights hashtags in blue. Hashtags allow users to search for topics of interest. It is important to use hashtags relevant to Acomb and the burn so that the rest of the community can benefit from what you are tweeting. Avoid using spaces in your hashtags.

*#RedBurnAcomb.*



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## Should I use Twitter to submit my findings, thoughts and observations about the Red Burn catchment and how often?

Yes... you are encouraged to use Twitter as often as you like to:

- **Network** and **communicate** with other members of the Red and Birkey Burn community;
- Help increase project **awareness** within Acomb and wider Northumberland (other communities) and show/tell people what a great job you are doing;
- Contribute to the database of catchment observations – help build the ‘**bigger picture**’ and allow others to benefit from your observations;
- Share **interesting observations** you make within the catchment – e.g. are the river levels extremely low? Has the burn suddenly peaked following rainfall? Does the Burn look discoloured and different to normal at a particular location?

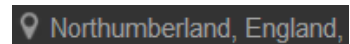
You can use Twitter to submit your daily / weekly / monthly observations. To do this must include **#RedBurn** or **#BirkeyBurn**, **@RedBurnAcomb**, **date**, **time** (24 hour clock) and a **location** of your observation(s). Although you might use Twitter to submit a general observation or comment, for particular observations (e.g. rainfall or river levels), please use the following relevant hashtags:



## Should I tweet whilst out in the catchment?



It would be great if you could send tweets whilst out in the catchment. You can do this by using a smartphone or tablet. If possible, enable your location to be shown whilst tweeting so that we have monitoring locations saved. If you do not have access to Twitter whilst out in the catchment, you can always use your computer once you get back home.

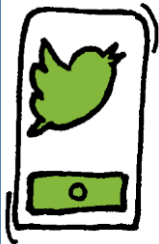


## How can I get additional followers?

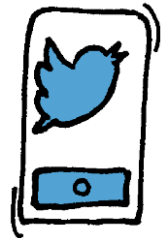
- Work on your profile ✓
- Keep active and send interesting tweets ✓
- Use a variety of hashtags e.g. #Northumberland is likely to reach a lot more Twitter users than just #Acomb ✓
- Follow people with similar interests ✓
- Have a look at who already follows @RedBurnAcomb – there are other people in the community who are already using Twitter for community monitoring purposes. ✓



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# Example..



An example of an observation tweet is provided below. This is just to get you started. Feel free to share your own catchment interests other types of observations too!

Always send your observations to @RedBurnAcomb

For each observation always include #RedBurn or #BirkeyBurn. Why? So that the rest of the community can find your tweets

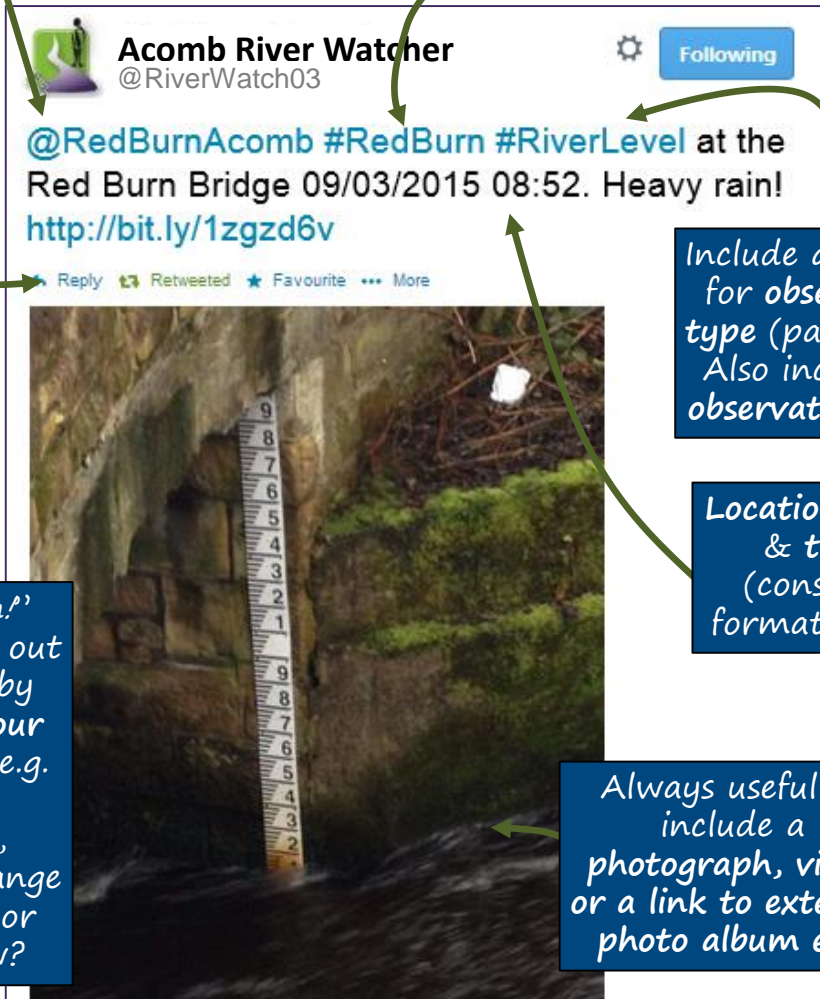
Spend time exploring these buttons. For example, you can reply to a tweet, resend (retweet) it and / or mark it as a favourite

Include a hashtag for observation type (parameter) Also include an observation value

Location, date & time (constant format helps)

“Heavy rain!” Why not bulk out your tweet by describing your observation (e.g. weather conditions, noticeable change in the river or stream flow?)

Always useful to include a photograph, video or a link to external photo album etc.



Example of a tweet used to submit a river level observation

**i** Did you know that Twitter was established in 2006? Around 500 million tweets are sent each day. The [Haltwhistle River Watch Group](#) are also using Twitter.

For further support and guidance please contact Action 4 Acomb – contact details can be found on the website: <http://www.action4acomb.co.uk/>



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