

Social media

Social media is a very public way of enabling us as Christians to live out our calling to share the good news of Jesus Christ. One of its many joys is that it is immediate, interactive, conversational and open-ended. This opportunity comes with a number of downsides if users do not apply the same common sense, kindness and sound judgement that we would use in a face-to-face encounter.

While written specifically for all users who engage with churches within the Church of England, these guidelines are built on universal principles.

By engaging with the Church of England and in particular, social media accounts connected to the Wye Reaches benefice, or while we post on other social media as individuals or representatives of our churches, we agree to:

- **Be safe.** The safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults must be maintained. If you have any concerns, ask the Vicar or the Benefice Safeguarding Officers.
- **Be respectful.** We will not post or share content that is sexually explicit, inflammatory, hateful, abusive, threatening or otherwise disrespectful.
- **Be kind.** We will treat others how you would wish to be treated and assume the best in people.
- **Be honest.** We will not mislead people about who we are.
- **Take responsibility.** We are accountable for the things that we do, say and write. Text and images shared can be public and permanent, even with privacy settings in place.
- **Be a good ambassador.** Personal and professional life can easily become blurred online.
- **Disagree well.** Some conversations can be places of robust disagreement and it's important we apply our values in the way we express them.
- **Credit others.** We will acknowledge the work of others. We will be careful not to release sensitive or confidential information and always question the source of any content you are considering amplifying.
- **Follow the rules.** We will abide by the terms and conditions of the various social media platforms themselves.

PCC Responsibilities

Further guidance on the use of social media for PCC members can be found in section 12 of 'The Church of England Parish Handbook', a copy of which is in this file.

How will we respond to breaches of our social media guidelines?

We may take action if we receive complaints or spot inappropriate, unsuitable or offensive material posted to the national social media accounts. This may include deleting comments, blocking users or reporting comments as appropriate.

Who do I speak to for further advice?

If you have a safeguarding concern, please speak to the Vicar or the Benefice Safeguarding Officers. If you have a general concern, please speak to either the Vicar or the relevant churches Churchwarden.

Rev Tim G J Starling
Vicar
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