

PCC Statement on use of Social Media

St John the Baptist Kingston Vale

Charity, no. 1171550



Social media is a highly popular form of communication, for young and old members of the community alike. Ultimately social media is about people communicating with other people; there's nothing intrinsically good or bad about it. Regardless of personal feelings concerning social media, it is worth bearing in mind that a highly popular means of sharing information both globally and locally is of immense value.

Having a presence on Facebook and Instagram provides a helpful 'noticeboard' for our church (much like our website). Current and recent information which would ordinarily be posted to our website's calendar may be shared here and, helpfully, this information will appear in all subscribers' news feeds. These two channels give the edge over our parish website for reaching subscribers who have not chosen to check our website in a while.

The nature of social media is one of experimentation – trying ideas to see whether they work or not in a particular context. On this basis it is not proposed to have a social media policy at this time but the PCC promote adherence to the following basic *golden rules* for the St John's Facebook and Instagram pages:

1. Always use best judgement. If in doubt about posting something, don't post it.
2. Decide who has access to our social media accounts. Make sure they are aware of their responsibilities and the purpose of our social media presence.
3. Ensure the Parish office has a note of the different social media accounts and who is allowed to publish from them.
4. Use good, strong passwords to secure our social media accounts. Don't write these down unless it's in an encrypted form. Do not share them with unauthorised people or give unsanctioned people individual access to our account. When using a shared device do not save the password to the device and log out each time after use.
5. Photos of people are more attractive and appealing than photos of buildings in making the Church seem an active place. Consider using photos in which people are not easily identifiable (e.g. taken from behind or faces blurred out) if there is any concern that you don't have permission from those in the picture.
6. Photographs of children should be used with care. All children who attend St John's Church should have been the subject of a Registration Form which includes parental/carer's permission for use of photos of their children. This explicitly includes permission for photos to appear on social media as well as the website and the opportunity to opt out so that any such use of photos should either be cleared explicitly with parents on a case by case basis.

7. Where photos of children are taken on personal mobile phones, they should be deleted from the device as soon as possible.

In addition to these basic rules the following should all be noted:

1. Be a good ambassador for Christ, the Church and our part in it.
2. Know and follow our Church's safeguarding policy.
3. Users are personally responsible for the content they publish online, whether in a blog, social networking site or any other form of user-generated media. Be mindful that what is published will be public for an indefinite period of time. Protect your privacy and take care to understand a site's terms of service.
4. Make it clear (if necessary) that posts are not made on behalf of the Church of England, the bishops or the Diocese. Also be careful that you don't confuse posting on the church's page with your own personal page, although nothing should be posted anywhere which would compromise the church.
5. Respect the law, including copyright, libel and defamation laws.
6. Never break a confidence. Do not cite or reference individuals without their approval. If you are telling a story about a third party, ask yourself, 'is this my story to tell?'
7. Don't publish anything that might allow inferences to be drawn which could embarrass or damage an individual.
8. Respect your audience. Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in a Christian environment or Church of England workplace.
9. Don't pick fights! The internet is home to a lot of argumentative people. When posting, seek to generate light and not heat.
10. Be the first to correct your own mistakes.
11. Try to add value. Provide worthwhile information and perspective. The Church of England is best represented by its people and what we publish may reflect on not only St John's but also Christianity.
12. Social media entries may well attract wider media interest in individuals. Proceed with caution and remember that you are responsible for your online activities.

Signed: A Beck

Amanda Beck

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Role: Vicar