

The Parochial Church Council of St Peter's Church Westhampnett



Social Media Policy

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General Statement

1. Our Parish has pledged to abide by the Social Media Community Guidelines of the Church of England.
2. This policy, which sets out how our parish Church uses social media, has been approved by the PCC and will be shared among the congregation and wider community through the church website, noticeboards, and other regular communications.
3. This policy will explain what those who follow our official Facebook account, and any other social media accounts we choose to operate in future, can expect from us.

Responsibilities

4. The PCC/Associate Rector/Priest in Charge/Incumbent is responsible for implementing this policy.
5. Our social media accounts will be managed by one or more administrators whose names will be published on the Who's Who page of our website, see <https://www.stpeterswesthampnett.uk/whos-who/>

Our Content

6. We do not use automation to post content, such as tools that generate tweets from RSS feeds. Our followers can generally expect no more than one post a day, usually less, and covering the following:
 - a. alerts about new content relating to the Church such as news, events, publicity campaigns and similar
 - b. alerts about new content or resources relating to the wider Church, the diocese or partner charities and charitable concerns supported by the Parish.

Following

7. We may follow organisations and public individuals that share in or represent the ministry of the Church in the Diocese of Chichester. They may include (but are not exclusively limited to) other parishes, Christians, the local church community and charitable organisations that they support. We may also follow groups local to Chichester.
8. We do not automatically follow those who choose to follow us.
9. Due to resource of time, we review our follower list infrequently.
10. Being followed by us does not imply endorsement of any kind.

Availability

- 11. We will update and monitor our social media accounts as often as we can.
- 12. We accept no responsibility for lack of service due to third party downtime.

Posts, Comments, @replies and Direct Messages

- 13. We welcome feedback from all our followers and endeavour to join the conversation where possible. Accordingly the Associate Rector/Priest in Charge or a representative reads all posts, comments, @replies and Direct Messages. However, we are not able to reply individually to all the messages we receive and we do not engage on issues of party politics or answer questions which may infringe personal privacy.
- 14. Communicating directly online via social media is not encouraged. Private matters should be communicated privately via the usual channels such as telephone, e-mail and letter. Social media users should be aware that the Associate Rector/Priest in Charge is the point of contact for all enquiries relating to the Parish. Contact details are available on the Who's Who section of our website, see <https://www.stpeterswesthampnett.uk/whos-who/>
- 15. Third party content of any kind that is unwelcome, offensive or in breach of the law or Church of England Social Media Community Guidelines may be **removed and/or reported**.

Safeguarding

- 16. Our social media pages, are not the place to report any safeguarding issue. Any serious concerns relating to individuals (past or present) should be reported to Sussex Police. The Diocese of Chichester safeguarding officers are available to speak to anyone who wishes to talk in confidence. They can be contacted on 01273 421021.

Law

- 17. Whilst sharing thoughts and reflections with friends or followers via social media can seem personal and private, it is not. It is very public and can be shared very quickly. By law, if one or more people can access it, content is classed as published, in the public domain and subject to legislation around libel, defamation, copyright and data protection. If you wouldn't say something in a public meeting or to someone's face or write it in a newspaper or on headed paper – please don't say it online.

Church of England Social Media Community Guidelines

18. When engaging with our social media channels we respectfully ask that you agree to the Church of England Social Media Guidelines which are:

Be safe. The safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults must be maintained. If you have any concerns, ask a diocesan safeguarding adviser

Be respectful. Do not post or share content that is sexually explicit, inflammatory, hateful, abusive, threatening or otherwise disrespectful.

Be kind. Treat others how you would wish to be treated and assume the best in people. If you have a criticism or critique to make, consider not just *whether* you would say it in person, but the tone you would use.

Be honest. Don't mislead people about who you are.

Take responsibility. You are accountable for the things you do, say and write. Text and images shared can be public and permanent, even with privacy settings in place. If you're not sure, don't post it.

Be a good ambassador. Personal and professional life can easily become blurred online so think before you post.

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. Acknowledge the work of others. Respect copyright and always credit where it is due. Be careful not to release sensitive or confidential information and always question the source of any content you are considering amplifying.

Follow the rules. Abide by the terms and conditions of the various social media platforms themselves. If you see a comment that you believe breaks their policies, then please report it to the respective company.

Our Social Media

19. The official Parish Social Media account is:
<https://www.facebook.com/stpeterswesthampnett/>

Approved by the PCC and signed on its behalf by
The Reverend Rachel Hawes (Associate Rector):



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Version History		
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January 2025	Document created and approved by PCC	January 2027