

Policy for Safer Use of Social Media

St Clement's Church Sandwich and St Peter and St Paul Church Worth

Guidelines for Responsible and Secure Online Engagement

The Church of England recognises the importance of social media as a tool for communication, outreach, and community building. In order to promote a safe and respectful online environment, this policy outlines key principles and practical guidance for clergy, staff, volunteers, and congregation members using social media platforms.

Principles

- **Respect and Kindness:** All interactions online should be conducted with courtesy, kindness, and respect for others. Avoid posting or sharing content that could be considered offensive, inflammatory, or discriminatory.
- **Confidentiality:** Do not share confidential or sensitive information about individuals, church matters, or pastoral issues on social media. Obtain consent before posting photographs or personal details.
- **Safeguarding:** Uphold safeguarding standards at all times. If concerns arise about the safety or wellbeing of anyone, report them promptly through appropriate church channels.
- **Transparency:** Clearly identify yourself when representing the church online. Avoid anonymous or misleading accounts.
- **Accountability:** Take responsibility for your posts and comments. If mistakes are made, correct them promptly and apologise if necessary.

Guidance for Safe Use

- Use privacy settings to control who can see your posts and personal information.
- Regularly review and update your social media profiles to ensure they reflect your current role and responsibilities.
- Be mindful of the tone and content of your posts, remembering that online comments can be misinterpreted.
- Do not engage in heated or abusive exchanges. If necessary, disengage and seek advice from church leadership.
- Report any inappropriate or unsafe behaviour encountered on social media to the church safeguarding team.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to reflect changes in technology, church practice, and safeguarding requirements. Feedback from church members is welcomed to ensure these guidelines remain effective and relevant.

By adhering to these principles and guidelines, the Church of England aims to foster a safe, respectful, and supportive digital community for all its members.

Adopted by PCC: 21st May 2026

To be reviewed: May 2029