



## **St Bart's Social Media Policy – (updated autumn 2022)**

### **Based on Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook**

- St Bart's Church currently uses a range of digital communication tools including email, Mailchimp, website, YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, WeChat and Instagram. Because of their interactive design, the last four are often labelled as 'social media'. With all of these platforms we will abide by age restrictions/guidance. In addition to the whole church media platforms, smaller groups also use social media.
- The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media – the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium.
- With the appointment of a Communications Officer since 1 September 2021 we have had stronger oversight of these social media platforms.
- As a church we are committed to ensuring these social media platforms are beneficial, positive and safe for all users and that we prevent content or comment that is inappropriate, negative, offensive, bullying, sexual or suggestive.
- In addition, we are committed to ensuring that staff and others using these platforms keep appropriate boundaries between professional and private life. Staff are expected to be wise in what they post even in their private accounts. Guidance on other positive online behaviours is given below.
- We also need to take care in regards to posting any information about mission partners working in sensitive situations.
- We will take particular care in regards to children and young people. This will include:
  - Always asking parents/carers for permission to:
    - Use photographs or video for church publicity (see section below which is a statement that we have made to church members in regards to photography)
    - Contact their children/young people by phone, text or email (we will never contact through Facebook, Instagram and similar – if we are contacted by the young person who we know is under 18 we will not reply and we will explain to the parent and young person why we can't reply).
  - Not using digital media for one-to-one private conversations with young people
  - Not adding children, young people or vulnerable adults as friends or followers on personal accounts
  - Not allowing those under 18 to join church online groups, such as closed Facebook groups and WhatsApp groups.
- Safeguarding concerns will be reported to Alex Williams (Parish Safeguarding Officer) or Hilary Haig (Assistant Parish Safeguarding Officer), and if appropriate to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. Other concerns in regards to social media should be brought to the attention of a member of the staff team.
- Our inspiration to get things right for all concerned is inspired by the Bible and what we read of God's care, kindness, compassion and purity - we commend reading these relevant

passages: Psalm 140 v 12, Isaiah 1 v17, Proverbs 31 v8-9, Psalm 82, Psalm 72, Psalm 121, Jeremiah 22 v1-3, Psalm 19, Colossians 3 v 12-17 and Galatians 5 v22-26.

Andrew Dawes

Operations Manager

Approved by PCC 29 September 2021 – updated by AMD autumn 2022

### **Some Church of England guidance in regards to positive online behaviour:**

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.

### **Photographs (statement to church November 2022)**

Please could we ask that members of the church family don't take photographs or video recordings in church services or other events without the consent of all those included in the image(s)? Parental consent is required for taking an image of anyone under 17. On occasions a small number of authorised individuals may take photographs to use in church publicity. Where photographs of individuals or small groups are being taken, permission will be sought in advance. If you have any concerns, please do contact Andrew Dawes, Alex Williams or Hilary Haig. Many thanks for your support. Pages 30-33 provide the context for this request:

[https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/Safer%20Environment%20and%20Activities%20Oct19\\_0.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/Safer%20Environment%20and%20Activities%20Oct19_0.pdf)