

The Parish of St Wilfrid's, Brayton Social Media Policy

Social Media

Today social media has become an increasing influence on many people's lives. For many younger people it may have become a primary source for gaining information about the world around them and networking with friends and acquaintances. Used responsibly, social media and the internet can be of benefit to the Church, providing the opportunity for networking, getting to know people, gaining and sharing information about church events, learning about the Christian Faith, and spreading the Gospel.

The Church of England has adopted a number of simple principles for the use of social media in church life.

- **Be safe.** The safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults must be maintained. If you have any concerns, ask the Parish safeguarding officer.
- **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.

Further information can be found here: www.churchofengland.org/terms-and-conditions/our-social-media-community-guidelines.

St Wilfrid's PCC has signed up to the Archbishops' Social Media Charter which is a voluntary pledge for individual Christians and churches to help make social media and the web more widely positive places for conversations to happen: www.churchofengland.org/terms-and-conditions/our-digital-charter.

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Using Social Media

Users are personally responsible for the content they publish on-line, whether in a blog, on Facebook, Twitter or any other form of user-generated media. Be mindful that what you publish may be public for an indefinite period of time. Protect your privacy and take care to understand a site's terms of service.

- Respect copyright
- Respect libel and defamation laws.
- Never provide details of confidential matters or the performance of groups such as the PCC or its sub committees.
- 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?"
- When you do make a reference, link back to the source. Don't publish anything that might allow inferences to be drawn that could embarrass or damage an individual.
- 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.

Confidentiality

The existence of social media does not change the Church's understanding of confidentiality. Within the life of the Church, there are private or closed meetings, private conversations and confidential matters. All involved have a right to expect others will respect that confidentiality. Breaking confidentiality in social media is as wrong as it would be in any other context. If a confidence is broken, it can spread via social networking with alarming speed and will be impossible to retract. It may be prudent therefore, to ensure those attending sensitive meetings or briefings understand the restrictions placed upon the sharing of that information.

Uploading photographs and videos.

- Photographs and video should never be taken during church services without the permission of the clergy.
- Photographs and video should never be uploaded without the permission of the individuals involved.
- Photographs and video should never be uploaded which could misrepresent, embarrass, or compromise the individuals involved.
- Do not photograph or video children without obtaining permission from their parents. Follow the guidelines in St Wilfrid's policy for use of photographs and video recordings of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Friends and followers

Social networking sites are often based around the idea of "friends" or "followers". Depending on the privacy settings selected, postings can be viewed by a select audience or by the world! Care should be taken to ensure the appropriate privacy settings are selected. If unsure it may be better to communicate more directly using media such as email.

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Children and Young People.

Whilst children and young people may appear technologically competent, they do not necessarily have the maturity to understand the dangers they may be exposed to. It is important that children and young people understand and stay safe and the guidance should be followed:

- Ensure all electronic communications are appropriate and professional. If using e-technology as a group activity, ensure that an adult worker knows and understands what is happening within the group.
- Communication between children and adults by whatever method should always take place within clear and explicit boundaries. This includes face to face contact, mobile phones, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, video chats, webcams, websites, social media sites, and blogs.
- A code of conduct for on line communication should be shared with children/young people and their parents.
- An appropriate risk assessment should be produced before online activities involving children/young people take place.
- Adults should not give their personal contact details to children or young people, including their mobile telephone number and details of any blogs or personal websites.
- Do not make any relationship with a child (other than family members) through a social networking site. Only make contact with children for professional reasons, making sure that their parent/guardian has given permission.
- Maintain a log of any electronic contact with an individual regarding all matters or subjects that fall outside of the normal 'day to day' youth work contact.
- The minimum age for social networking must be observed.
- Privacy settings and use of strong passwords should be used to keep personal data private. Ensure that all shared computers have a different password for all users so that they cannot be accessed secretly.

Please refer to the social media guidelines on the Diocese of York website for further information. <https://dioceseofyork.org.uk/running-your-church/communications/social-media/>

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Policy Adoption

This policy is adopted and will be reviewed annually by the PCC of
(Name of Parish or Benefice) **The Parish of St Wilfrid, Brayton**

Signed:
(Incumbent)

(Church Warden)

Signed as Chair Hilary Hilary Atman
of the PCC
Hilary Atman

Print Name:
(Incumbent)

(Church Warden)

and
Signed as the
PCC Secretary Ruth Breeze
Ruth Breeze

Date: 04/12/2024

as no incumbent or Churchwarden