

## **Digital Charter**

This is a voluntary pledge that the Church of England encourages individual Christians as well as churches to sign to help make social media and the web more widely positive places for conversations to happen.

The digital landscape has changed so much in the last few years and will continue to do so as technology develops. It's important to think about how the conversations we're having can help change someone's newsfeed for the better.

What does it look like to be a Christian online? Everyone's engagement is different. Whether you're a member of clergy using Twitter or a churchgoer replying to the comments on a blog, we all have different views, histories and areas of interest that will affect how we perceive things, and our responses to those events. The comments we make can reach thousands and even millions of people both in this country and around the world very quickly.

However, there are a number of ways we can make the digital world as loving and generous as we would when speaking face to face:

- Truth - we should hold ourselves to high ideals of checking that what we post online is fair and factual.
- Kindness - we are all different and that makes the world an interesting place – and at times a challenging one. Think the best of people, whether they share our views or are speaking against them and aim to be constructive in the way we engage.
- Welcome - in the language we use and the way we interact. It's easy for Christians to speak in another language using words that those outside the Church might not relate to.
- Inspiration - we are called to be witnesses of our faith and to use social media in a way that genuinely engages others.
- Togetherness - we are one Church and other members of this Church are our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is crucial we treat those around us in this way.
- Safeguarding - if you have any concerns about the wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults, please contact the relevant diocesan safeguarding adviser.
- Agree to the Church's and Archbishops' social media guidelines.

## **Our social media community guidelines**

The Church of England's community guidelines have been created to encourage conversations that reflect our values. They apply to all content posted on the national social media accounts run by the Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Archbishop of York.

Social media is a very public way of enabling us as Christians to live out our calling to share the good news of Jesus Christ. One of its many joys is that it is immediate, interactive, conversational and open-ended. This opportunity comes with a number of downsides if users do not apply the same common sense, kindness and sound judgement that we would use in a face-to-face encounter.

While written specifically for all users who engage with the Church of England's and Archbishops' national social media channels, these guidelines are built on universal principles. They are a resource for Christians, people of other faiths and people of no faith. Dioceses and local churches across the Church of England are welcome and encouraged to adopt them.

The Parish of Wickford and Runwell has agreed to adopt the community guidelines and therefore agrees to:

- 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.

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