



St Helen's Church

The Church of England in

West Auckland, St Helen Auckland and Tindale Crescent

Website Manager: Ian Skillcorn, Emma Gunn

www.sthelenschurch.co.uk

Designated Facebook Managers: Fr Edward Gunn (Curate), Gareth Gladman (Youth and Community Worker), Ann Skillcorn (Church Warden), John Bake (Church Warden), Helen Auckland, Ian Skillcorn, Dianne Chew, Claire Bake.

Designated Instagram Managers: Gareth Gladman (Youth and Community Worker)

Designated Twitter Managers: Fr Edward Gunn (Curate)

The Parochial Church Council notes and follows the Diocesan advice and guidelines given below. Those with responsibility for publishing material on social media are given this policy and agree to adhere to it.

The publication of pictures of young people and vulnerable adults on our social media or notice boards only occurs by the appropriate consent.

Social Media Guidelines/Policy: Social media is immediate, interactive, conversational and open-ended. This sets it apart from other forms of communication and demands a new way of thinking. As well as the many opportunities, users should also be aware of (though not put off by) the associated risks.

These good practice guidelines have been compiled to help clergy, office-holders and staff already active on social media (or thinking about it!) fulfil, with confidence, their role as online ambassadors for their local parish, the wider Church and our Christian faith.

All are based on principles of common sense and good judgement. Essentially, you should participate online in the same way as you would in any other public forum. Your actions should be consistent with your work and Christian values and you are responsible for the things you do, say or write.

1. Don't rush in

The immediacy of social media is one of its benefits – we can respond quickly to questions, correct misunderstandings, give our perspective about a breaking story in the news media. Responding quickly doesn't mean doing so without due consideration.

Before posting always think:

- Is this my story to share?
- Would I want my mum to read this?
- Would I want God to read this?
- Would I want this on the front page of a newspaper?



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This point applies even before you start posting your own content. Spend a while listening to others, getting a feel for the tone in that particular forum, giving thought to how you might participate.

2. Transient yet permanent

Social media updates are immediate and will outdate quickly BUT they can have a more lasting impact and you should assume that anything you post is permanent.

Even if you delete it later on, it may have been seen and re-published or referred to elsewhere.

3. You're an ambassador

Like it or not, if you are ordained, lead in or are employed by the Church, others will see you in your public role as a representative of the Church.

If talking/commenting about a church matter, please see details below under Policy.

4. Don't hide

Anonymity and 'hiding' behind aliases when using social media is frowned upon. It's also at odds with what we consider the main reason for using social media networks. How can anyone really connect with an alias?

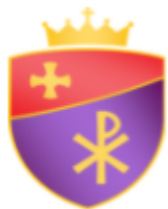
On any social media platform, if you choose a username or profile different to your real name, include brief personal details in the about section. When the account is a shared one, for example, a Facebook page for your parish, ensure people can easily find out who is responsible for the content.

5. Blurring of public/private life boundaries

In everyday ministry, the distinction between public duties and private life is difficult to draw. It is no different online. There are risks associated with personal opinions being seen as public statements, a minister's private life being invaded and the difficulties of detaching from work.

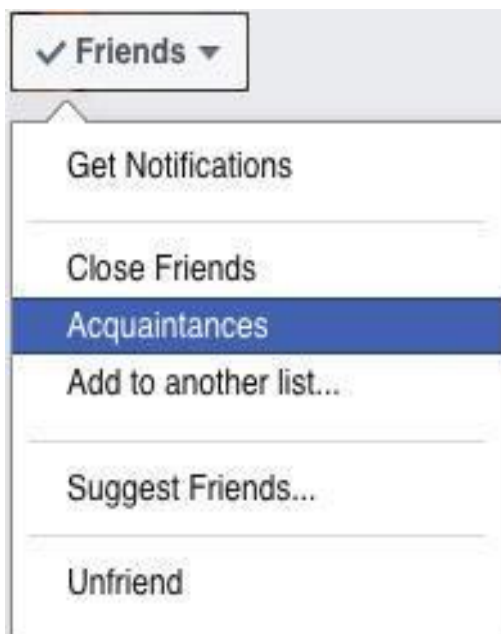
Consider setting up separate accounts for ministry and personal use to help set definite boundaries.

Alternatively, use privacy settings wisely. For example, you may not want to 'over share' personal updates on your Facebook profile – so keep close friends as 'friends', and all other people as 'acquaintances' (pictured below left). That way content you post on Facebook can be filtered (pictured below right). Blurring of boundaries also applies to private messaging through any social media: if the conversation wouldn't be appropriate person to person, nor would it be online.



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6. Safeguarding

The informality that social media encourages can mean that it might be harder to maintain a professional distance that is required when working with children, young people and the vulnerable.

Communicating directly online with someone, for example with private messaging, is like meeting them in private. You're advised to send messages to groups, rather than individuals, or share them publicly.

If you are unsure about how to approach a communication, or are having problems with an existing online relationship, we have a Safeguarding Officer (Dianne Chew) who is here to help or you can contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, Beth Miller whose details are below.

7. Stay within the legal framework

Whilst sharing thoughts and reflections with friends or followers via social media can seem personal and private, it is not. 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 – don't say it online.



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8. Confidentiality

Use of social media does not change the Church's understanding of confidentiality. Within the life of the Church there are private meetings and conversations, particularly in terms of pastoral work.

Breaking confidentiality is as wrong as it would be in any other context. Arguably, it is worse as via social media a broken confidence could spread rapidly and be impossible to retract.

Remember: Is this story mine to share? If in doubt, don't.

9. Be mindful of your own security

Don't overshare personal information. Never publish detailed personal information such as your address or telephone number, unless in a private message to someone you know and trust.

10. Get in touch

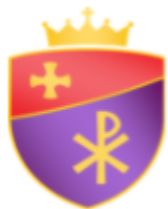
If you have any questions or issues with using social media, feel free to get in touch with Fr Edward.

Policies

Policy for Using Social Media

For the purpose of this Policy, "the organisation" includes the Church of England, Diocese of Durham or St Helen's .

- If you comment on any aspect of the work of the organisation or any policy issue for the organisation, you must clearly identify yourself.
- When leaving comments on other blogs or posts, if the original subject is related to the Church of England, the Diocese of Durham or St Helen's then the person posting their comment must identify themselves and their connection with the Church of England, Diocese or Parish.
- It is your responsibility to be aware of and to follow the Diocese of Durham and St Helen's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. This includes the transmission and publication of images of young and vulnerable people. Please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding team or Parish Safeguarding Officer for advice or with any concerns.



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- You must be clear about who you are. When discussing topics relevant to the Church of England, Diocese of Gloucester or St Helen's, you must use your real name. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, be the first to point it out. Protect yourself and your privacy.
- By virtue of identifying yourself as a member of the clergy or the Church, within a social network, you are nurturing connection with your colleagues and the global Christian community. You must ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work and the Christian values of love, tolerance and forgiveness.

Opportunities

- **Increases communications impact, scale, efficiency and immediacy**
There is no printing or mailing. You can share your message in powerful and effective ways and others can then share it and pass it on.
- **Builds relationships and community**
Social media feels personal. It provides interactive ways of connecting to other people in a communal way, and is a great way for the Church to live out and extend its corporate life. As we express our life online, those outside the Church can observe its witness.
- **Provides opportunities for participation, collaboration, feedback**
There are great examples of how social media has been used for social change. It also provides an opportunity to get feedback.
- **Reaches and connects with new groups where they are communicating**
Social media is a space where people who the Church struggles to connect with are communicating. And we can join them in that space.
- **Enhances learning and generates ideas**
Discipleship can be fostered and nurtured.

Risks

- **Forming inappropriate relationships**
Online banter and private messaging can both lead to a level of intimacy that you would naturally guard against.
- **Saying things you should not – with increased impact**
Social media is public, permanent and has published status. There is a risk of [illegal] comments that could be seen as hate crimes, libellous, defamatory remarks etc. Remember the golden rule (in the box at the top of the page).
- **Breach of confidentiality and gossip**
As with saying things you should not, electronic and online communication can be used to breach confidentiality and spread gossip.
- **Blurring of public ministry/private life boundaries**
The distinction between public ministry and private life is difficult to draw. This is no different online. There are risks associated with personal opinions being seen as



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public statements, a minister's private life being invaded and the difficulties of detaching from their work. It is advised that ministers draw clear boundaries around their social media usage associated with their private life and use different social media for their public ministry (more details on this above).

- **Bullying, harassment and malicious accusations**

Social media can be used to bully and harass others and is a forum for malicious accusations. Young people are particularly vulnerable to this.

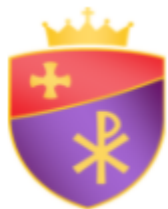
- **Grooming and impersonation**

There are clear dangers, particularly for children and young people, from those who use social media as a means of grooming.

Consent Data Protection and UK/EU GDPR

If no one from your congregation will be identifiable during filming or photography then you don't need to gain consent. However, if members of the congregation will be visible, consider the following:

- **Data Protection and UK/EU GDPR permissions for adults:** Those appearing in film or photography will need to have given consent, as religion is a protected feature under Data Protection and UK/EU GDPR. A photo release form can be signed by adults and must include all the places that the photo or video may be used by the church. Regular attendees at the church need to only sign this once but it should be refreshed regularly, such as every three years. However, new visitors should be asked before the service or event begins.
- **Data Protection and UK/EU GDPR permissions for children:** Videos containing children (under the age of 16) may be used by the church if consent has been given by their parent or guardian, following the same guidelines as above. If permission has not been given, it can be helpful to identify these children by using a simple paper wristband, or by asking them to sit in the photo and video free zone.
- **Prepare ahead for photography/filming in your church building:** Tell your community your plans for filming and send out the photo release forms to your email list, WhatsApp groups, or Facebook groups – anywhere your community can see it - so they are ready. Have spare copies with you on the day for anyone who has not yet signed. Remember, your regular attendees only need to sign this once every three years.
- **Consider Creating photo and video free zones:** Those who do not give consent to be in a video or photo do not need to sign the consent form. Create a safe space within your church building where they may sit. This could be a side aisle, or a few rows at the back. Simple signs will help identify where this space is, and make sure that those who are filming or taking photos are aware.



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- **Update your privacy policy:** Include this paragraph in your privacy policy and display it somewhere with your church building and on your website so that it can be read before the consent form is signed.
 - Use this paragraph in your church privacy policy.
- **Remember, consent can be withdrawn**, resulting in deleting videos or images of that person. It is more likely that a church would experience members of their community not giving consent than withdrawing it later, however it is wise to be prepared for this to happen. **The process of withdrawing consent must be as easy as providing consent.**
- **Read the [Safer Environments for Churches Guidance](#)** from the National Safeguarding Team which covers more on GDPR and safeguarding for children and vulnerable adults.
- **Do seek advice and guidance on data protection issues** from Diocesan Data Protection Officer, pastoral@durham.anglican.org, or by post at The Diocese of Durham, Cuthbert House, Stonebridge, DURHAM, DH1 3RY

Photography, Filming and Live Streaming – Privacy Notice Guidance/Media Release Form (Consent)

Purpose

- Photography, recording or live-streaming services and events in order to advertise and showcase what we do and are about. To reach out to the community and be an online presence in the community.

The categories of personal data we collect:

- Image

We also process “special categories” of information that may include:

- Religious belief

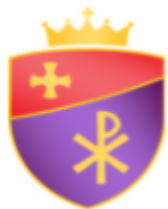
The lawful basis for using your information:

We collect and use personal data under the following lawful bases:

Explicit consent. By signing the Media Release form, you are consenting to us using your data for the purposes set out above.

Consent can be withdrawn at any time, by contacting us using the contact details provided below.

Who we share your information with:



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We will be sharing the images with the general public, by uploading it to social media, our website, The Society (Forward in Faith) and the Diocese.

How long do we keep your information?

We will keep your data for 3 years, after which time we may renew your consent, and may remove the video.

Your rights

- The right to withdraw your consent at any time by contacting the data protection officer Claire Bake, Tel: 07879 651 392 Email: st.helen.dataprotection@gmail.com

Contact Numbers:

Diocesan Safeguarding Officer: Beth Miller

Tel: 07968034075

Email: berth.miller@durham.anglican.org | beth@bethmillerisw.co.uk

Diocesan Data Protection Officer:

Email: pastoral@durham.anglican.org

Parish Safeguarding Officer: Dianne Chew

Email: st.helen.safeguarding@gmail.com

Parish Data Protection Officer: Claire Bake

Tel: 07879 651 392

Email: st.helen.dataprotection@gmail.com

Parish Priest: Fr Robert McTeer

Tel: 01388 604 152

Email: fr.r.mcteer@btinternet.com

Curate: Fr Edward Gunn

Tel: 07485 756 177

Email: st.helen.curate@gmail.com

Youth and Community Worker: Gareth Gladman

Tel: 07485 545 287

Email: gpplabman@outlook.com

Website Managers:

Ian Skillcorn

Tel: 07737 249589

Email: ianskillcorn@yahoo.co.uk

Emma Gunn

Tel: 07826 086 535



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4th January 2022