



Social Media Policy

**The Benefice of St James the Great
Church, High Wych and St Mary, Gilston
with St Botolphs, Eastwick**

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1. Purpose

1.1 This policy provides guidance for clergy, staff, volunteers, and congregation members who use social media on behalf of, or in association with, the churches in the Benefice of St James the Great, High Wych and St Mary, Gilston with St Botolph, Eastwick. It aims to ensure that our Benefice online presence reflects our Christian values and supports our mission.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all official Benefice and individual church social media accounts and any personal accounts used in a way that could be associated with the church.

3. The Principles of Online Engagement

3.1 Be Safe

- Protect the privacy and safety of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
- Follow safeguarding policies and report concerns to the Benefice Safeguarding Officer.

3.2 Be Respectful

- Avoid posting or sharing content that is offensive, inflammatory, or disrespectful.
- Engage in conversations with grace, even when disagreeing.

3.3 Be Kind

- Treat others as you would wish to be treated.
- Assume the best in others and avoid sarcasm or harsh criticism.

3.4 Be Honest

- Be truthful and transparent about your identity and role.
- Do not mislead or impersonate others.

3.5 Be Accountable

- Remember that posts can be public and permanent.
- Think before you post: "Would I say this in person?"

3.6 Be a Good Ambassador

- Recognise that your online presence reflects on the Benefice.
- Maintain a clear distinction between personal opinions and official Church of England or Benefice positions.

3.7 Disagree Well

- Engage in respectful dialogue and avoid personal attacks.
- Seek to build understanding, not division.

3.8 Credit Others

- Respect copyright and intellectual property.
- Always credit sources and creators.

4. Practical Guidance

4.1 **Content Approval:** Only authorised individuals may post on official church accounts.

4.2 **Confidentiality:** Do not share private or sensitive information.

4.3 **Moderation:** Inappropriate comments may be removed, and users may be blocked if necessary.

4.4 **Platform Rules:** Follow the terms of service of each social media platform.

5. Breaches of Policy

5.1 Breaches may result in removal of content, revocation of posting privileges, or further action in line with safeguarding or disciplinary procedures.

6. Review and Update

6.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Ministry Secretary and may be amended as necessary to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the church, financial regulations, and donor feedback.

7. Approval

7.1 This policy was approved by the Ministry Team on 24th June 2025 and is effective immediately.