



St Mary the Virgin, Amersham with All Saints' Coleshill

Social Media Policy - 2025

The Benefice of St Mary's Amersham with All Saints' Coleshill

Social Media and Communications Policy 2022/2023

The use of digital and social media and electronic communication enables the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St Mary's Amersham and All Saints' Coleshill, to interact in a way which improves the communication within the PCC, between the PCC and the congregation, and with the wider community, businesses and external agencies with whom it works and serves.

The PCC has authorised use of different social media platforms. An up-to-date list of social media platforms used can be found in appendix 1.

Email is used as the most efficient medium to communicate with the congregation and external agencies. The PCC will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications. Over time, the PCC may add to the channels of communication it uses, as it seeks to improve and expand the services it delivers. When these changes occur, this Policy will be updated with the aim of reflecting the new arrangements.

The aim of these guidelines is to help all of us at St Mary's and All Saints' to be effective ambassadors for Christ, online as much as in person. Our policy on personal data and GDPR is outlined here: <https://amershamwithcoleshillparish.org.uk/privacy-policy>

Communications from the PCC and its members will:

- be civil, tasteful and relevant;
- not contain material which is knowingly unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive;
- not contain content knowingly copied from elsewhere, for which they do not own the copyright;
- not contain any personal information, other than necessary basic contact details;
- if official PCC business, the communication will be moderated by either the Churchwardens, PCC Secretary, Rector, Associate Rectors or Treasurer;
- social media will not be used for the dissemination of any political party advertising.

Equally, we expect any communications to the PCC:

- to be civil, tasteful and relevant;
- not to contain content that is unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive;

- not to contain content copied from elsewhere, for which the enquirer does not own the copyright;
- not to include large volumes of the same message (also called "spamming");
- not to contain anyone's personal information, other than necessary basic contact details.

The PCC's response to any communications received which do not meet the above criteria will be to either ignore, inform the sender of our policy or send a brief response as appropriate. This will be at the PCC's discretion based on the message received, given our limited resources available.

The following has also been agreed:

Internal communication and access to information within the PCC:

- The PCC will, from time to time, review the way it communicates to investigate if current processes can be improved. The use of social media and electronic communications are currently a major factor in delivering such improvement.

PCC Email:

- The Rector has a '@amershamwithcoleshill.org' email address. This email account is normally monitored during office hours, Saturday - Thursday, and they will aim to reply to all questions as soon as they reasonably can; other individuals groups with this email domain are:
 - Flower team
 - Social team
 - Curate
- The Parish Administrator has a work email address for parish business. This email account is normally monitored during office hours (9am - 1pm) , Monday to Friday, and we aim to reply to all questions sent as soon as we reasonably can;
- The Parish Administrator is usually responsible for dealing with general email communication received and forwarding on messages to others for action;
- All official communications on behalf of the PCC must come from the Churchwardens, PCC Secretary, Rector, Clergy or Treasurer (unless the PCC has authorised a responsible person to do so);
- Individual PCC members are at liberty to communicate directly by email with parishioners and others in relation to their own personal view, if appropriate, with a copy sent to the Parish Administrator;
- These procedures ensure that a complete and proper record of all correspondence is kept.

Photographs:

- Church attendees who take their own photographs will be asked not to upload them onto a social media site if they include a child/person who is not their own family member, unless prior permission has been sought and in the case of a child from a person with parental responsibility for that child.
- Members of the congregation are encouraged not to post images of other members of the church on their own social media accounts without gaining permission of those people in the photograph.
- Youth Group members must not post images of other under 18s onto their own social media accounts without the advance permission being obtained from those having parental responsibility for the subjects. In addition they must not show or forward any sexual/offensive photographs/pictures/texts to others when taking part in any 'church' activity.
- Youth groups will have their own social media policy which the PCC will ensure is maintained.

- No photos of under 18s will be used for official church purposes such as advertising or the website.

Responsibilities concerning the Website:

- The Website is managed by The Rector and Tomasz Kołodziejcki.
- The Parish Administrator, Rector, Associate Rectors, Churchwardens and/or the PCC will arrange for new content to be uploaded;
- The PCC may, at its absolute discretion, allow and enable approved local groups to have and maintain a presence on its website for the purpose of presenting information about the group's activities. The local group would be responsible for maintaining the content and for ensuring it is in line with this Policy. The Rector on behalf of the PCC reserves the right to remove any or all of a local group's information from the website if s/he feels that content is not in line with the church's mission and ministry;
- Where content on the website is maintained by a local group, it must be clearly marked that such content is not the direct responsibility of the PCC.

Responsibilities concerning the Facebook Page:

- The Facebook Page is managed by the Rector. The following have administrative access and therefore are the only church members who can post as the St Mary's Facebook account: Rector, Clergy, Sheila Shield, Martin Pounce, Rhian Gardner, Michelle Catanach.
- All administrators of the church Facebook account should uphold the values and views of the church at all times when posting.
- Anyone can 'like' the Church's Facebook Page and they will then receive information on their Timeline when anything is posted to that page;
- Comments within a thread will appear without authorisation, these are however monitored by the administrative team;
- Reviews and messages to the page are also monitored by the administrative team.

Safeguarding:

- The Parish Safeguarding policy and the Diocese of Oxford's Safeguarding Policy will be followed at times;
- PCC members should be aware that communications with persons under the age of 18 or with vulnerable adults may give rise to safeguarding issues and extra care should be taken in communications with them (except those of a purely routine or factual nature). If PCC members consider that the content of such communications may give rise to safeguarding issues they should always first obtain advice from the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

SMS/WhatsApp (texting):

- PCC members and the Parish Administrator may send text messages as a convenient way to communicate at times. All texts are subject to the same behavioural and safeguarding rules as outlined above.

Video-conferencing, such as 'Skype' or 'Zoom' or Microsoft Teams:

- All video-conferencing is subject to the same behavioural and safeguarding rules as outlined above.
- For the purposes of recording video conferences, please see the streaming policy.

Ratified by the PCC on 16th September 2025

Appendix 1:

Social Media platforms currently operated by the PCC

1. Website: <https://www.amershamwithcoleshillparish.org.uk/>

2. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/stmarysamersham/>

3. Gmail Calendar

4. YouTube Channel: <https://youtube.com/@stmarysamershamwithallsain271>

Title: Social Media Policy - St Mary the Virgin, Amersham with All Saints' Coleshill		
Summary: As per title		
Date: 16/09/25	Review: 16/09/26	Version: 1.0
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