

Communications and your church



The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

Getting in touch

Holli Bielby

Development Officer: Communications

01353 652 730

holli.bielby@elydiocese.org

For general enquiries and to send details of events, job adverts etc. for the website, please email: communications@elydiocese.org

On our website you can find more advice and guidance on branding, social media and dealing with the press. elydiocese.org/communications

Diocese of Ely communications channels

- Newsletters, via Mailchimp. Sign up here: elydiocese.org/signup-to-our-newsletters
- Diocesan website: elydiocese.org
- Facebook: facebook.com/elydiocese
- Instagram: instagram.com/thedioceseofely
- LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/diocese-of-ely
- Bluesky: dioceseofely.bsky.social
- YouTube: youtube.com/@TheDioceseofEly

Follow us on socials, tag us in your posts, re-share any content that grabs your attention.

If you have a good idea, a good story or hints and tips of your own to share, we would love to hear from you!

Please email communications@elydiocese.org

Social Media guidelines

The Church of England has published a voluntary **digital charter** - guidelines for using social media - aimed at fostering a more positive atmosphere online.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/terms-and-conditions/our-social-media-community-guidelines>

Digital Charter

- **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 is 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 consider 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.

This is a [useful checklist](https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-england-digital-labs/labs-learning/checklist-setting-social-media-accounts) for setting up new social media accounts:
<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-england-digital-labs/labs-learning/checklist-setting-social-media-accounts>

Understanding Social Media

Social media provides a great opportunity to engage with our communities and show the church is relevant to their lives. **84% of the UK adult population** use social media (2023 statistic), with many people using social media as their first port of call when researching a brand (i.e. a church).

Involve your young people:

Social media can also be a great way to involve young people, or others who enjoy technology, in church life - ask them to help film videos or advise on creative and engaging posts. Remember, children under the age of 13 are not allowed a Facebook account, but they can still help create material for a church Facebook page or Instagram feed.

Design a logo:

Consider designing a simple logo/icon for your church that you can use across your website, as a social media profile picture, on signage and posters, so people will connect the building they walk past every day with the page they have browsed on Facebook or Instagram.

Why not reach out to your congregation for help in designing a logo? You'd be amazed at what hidden talent you have in the Pews!

Your Church name:

What should you call your church on social media? Do you go for the official name (e.g. The Parish of St John the Evangelist, Waterbeach and All Saints' Landbeach) or what people call it locally (e.g. St John's Waterbeach)? Choose a suitable name which local people outside the church community will be able to identify with.

Which Social Media platform is best?

Facebook is still the most important platform to be on. Around 85% of adults who use social media are on Facebook. Facebook is a great way to reach parents, young people and grandparents. Having a **public page** for your church is better than creating a '**group**'. Many people will use Facebook to look for the most **up to date details** on events happening at your Church.

Instagram is used by a lot of young people and increasingly by adults. It is a great place to share beautiful images, good quotes, bible verses and powerful testimonies. Around 60% of social media users are on Instagram.

Social Media tips

- Facebook is often used as an interactive community noticeboard.
- Create a **public Facebook page** for your Church, rather than using a closed 'group'. This will allow for more interaction with people in the wider community.
- Don't just put dates and times, try to write posts which ask a question or start a conversation.
- Always use a photo or video with a post to increase engagement.
- Make sure you have permission from anyone in the photo and written consent from parents of children under 16.
- Share photos from events, or photos and videos preparing for events e.g. people making costumes for a church holiday club, or choir practice for an upcoming carol service.
- Include links to your website but also make sure that all the basic information is easy to read in the post.
- Try filming a promotional video, e.g., maybe of the Vicar inviting people to a Sunday service. Remember, practice makes perfect, so don't worry if it doesn't look and sound perfect on the first 'take'!
- Try to film interviews somewhere interesting, maybe inside the Church itself, or outside in the churchyard.
- Make sure you have permission to use any images or music.
- Make a promotional e-flyer using Canva.
- If your local town or community has an active Facebook page, make sure the church is active on it too. Share posts from your church page to the community page with a comment or write new posts from scratch.
- Make sure you check your page for comments or questions regularly.
- Think twice before posting something to make sure you have got the tone right. If in doubt, show it to someone else.
- You can edit Facebook posts once they have gone live but not tweets.
- Try to have a few people as administrators/ editors on your Facebook page so different people can post (but not so many as you can't keep oversight of it and moderate it.)
- You don't have to post every day.
- You can also use social media tools to schedule posts to your page, and measure activity and engagement of your audience.

Policies and procedures

When you use social media accounts to promote your Church, it's a good idea to have associated policy and procedure documents outlining their use. These will need to be approved by your PCC. You can find some examples of policies that can be adapted for use by your PCC on our website - elydiocese.org/using-social-media.php.

Planning and publicising events

Design a good flyer, poster and social media advert:

Canva www.canva.com is a great free-to-use design website with loads of templates for flyers, posters and social media posts.

Ask if anyone in your congregation can help you with designing publicity materials. If you need extra support on using Canva, the Communications Officer can help.

Make your event stand out:

Use a bit of creativity in your planning. Events that are visually interesting, a bit unusual, involve interesting people or ordinary people in an interesting way, will attract people's attention.

Trail it on social media:

Use a series of posts leading up to the event. Don't just post about it once, remind people about your event by posting multiple times, changing the wording or graphics slightly each time, if possible, to keep people interested.

Share your good news stories

Write a press release or news article:

Most local news outlets will publish your articles online and in print, if they are emailed to the news desk in a 'ready to go' format.

- Have a look on our website for help on writing press releases and news articles. <https://elydiocese.org/press-media-interviews.php>
- Search online for email contact details for your local newspapers e.g. news@fenlandcitizen.co.uk
- Send it to your local paper and parish or village magazine.
- Send it to communications@elydiocese.org to include on the Diocese website.

Website Tips

- Keep it simple.
- Make the home page welcoming to visitors.
- Keep the information on the website up to date.
- Safeguarding contact information must be clearly displayed on the home page.
- Use photos to show the church/benefice is a living community
- Make sure up-to-date contact details are easy to find.

A Church Near You

- The Church of England has created 'A Church Near You', an online tool to help people search for their local church. <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/>
- Each church and benefice in England automatically has its own page.
- It is free to use and easy to edit.
- You can link your existing church website to this, meaning that anyone searching for your existing website address would get automatically re-directed to your A Church Near You page.