DIOCESE of WINCHESTER

SHERBORNES WITH PAMBER CHURCHES

Sherbornes with Pamber

Social Media Policy Statement

Social media is a collective term for websites and applications that enable users to create and share content and participate in social networking. The best-known platforms are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok and YouTube, but the term also covers online forums and blogs, as well as less well-known applications. When used well, social media is an effective means of connecting with people and offers a number of opportunities for the church. These opportunities are not without risks, but working within the following guidelines and using the same common sense, kindness and sound judgement that we would use in a face-to-face encounter, will help us to engage well with our church and communities.

- Sherbornes with Pamber will endeavour to work in ways which make the digital world safer, kinder, honest, respectful and accountable, respecting confidentiality, copyright, data protection and legal frameworks.
- Sherbornes with Pamber will adhere to the Church of England's guidelines and Winchester Diocese's guidelines in our use of social media and the best practice guidelines.
- Sherbornes with Pamber will also adhere to the guidelines set out in Section 4 of the Church of England Safer Environment and Activity Guidance 2019
- Sherbornes with Pamber will not publish images of children and young people under 18 online.
- Any safeguarding concerns that arise will be reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officer and Diocesan Safeguarding Manager. Please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team at safeguarding@winchesterdiocese.org if you have any questions.
- All church officers[1] are made aware of the best practice guidance on the use of social media, as above, and have a named person to whom they are accountable.
- When discussing topics relating to the Church of England or the Diocese of Winchester, all church officers must be clear about who they are and use their real name, and adhere to the guidelines above.
- The incumbent is ultimately responsible for the views and content shared on the parish's social media account. Any posts that could be considered controversial must therefore be approved by the incumbent or the PCC before publishing.

WhatsApp Groups

SWP uses WhatsApp Groups extensively to aid communication within ministries, teams and the wider church family. Our WhatsApp Groups are operated within the following protocols:

- All WhatsApp groups have two administrators.
- New members should not be added directly to groups. Instead they should be sent an invitation link to enable them to actively join themselves.

- WhatsApp group members understand that their mobile phone number will be visible to all other members of the group.
- The SWP Churches WhatsApp group only allows administrators to add content.
- All other WhatsApp groups allow contributions from all members.
- All home/hospital via the Pastoral Care Group to be recorded on the Pastoral Care Co-ordinators WhatsApp group.
- All administrators and contributing members must agree to the Content Standards below:

WhatsApp Group Content Standards

These content standards apply to any and all material which you contribute to the WhatsApp group (contributions), and to any interactive services associated with it.

Contributions must:

- **Be relevant.** Contributions should be directly related to the purpose of the group only and not be used for general conversation or sharing of material that is not related to the group.
- **Be safe.** The safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults must be maintained. If you have any concerns, contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- **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.

To keep our WhatsApp groups a safe and encouraging space for all, we may hide or delete comments which include:

- Information that is irrelevant to the purpose of the group.
- Hate speech or discrimination
- Abusive or threatening language
- Targeted harassment
- Spam, scams, or unrelated promotion
- Misinformation or harmful content
- Personal/private information

We may remove users who repeatedly break these rules.

The PCC has reviewed and approved the use of social media by Sherbornes with Pamber

Approved by PCC meeting of: 16th November 2026

Signed by PCC Chair: ……..

Name: …….. Date ……..

[1] A "Church Officer" is anyone appointed/elected by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.