

Communication and Engagement Guidelines 2020

DIOCESE
OF EXETER

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
IN DEVON



How the Communications and Engagement Department can help you and your church



“Use your heads as you live and work among outsiders. Don’t miss a trick. Make the most of every opportunity. Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not put them down, not cut them out.” Colossians 4: 5-6

The aim of the Communications and Engagement department is to provide **training, guidance and practical support** to help churches share faith stories and good news stories in ways which are creative and engaging.

We want to help inspire confidence in the message **AND** the medium. We are also on hand to guide churches through ‘news events’ and provide press support.

This guide aims to provide some practical advice and tips on doing media well. It is not definitive, and, with technology constantly changing, it will need updating regularly.

We hope you find it a useful starting point!



Chloe,
Katharine
& Matt

Getting in touch

Chloe Axford

Director of Communications and Engagement

01392 294905, 07889 523776

chloe.axford@exeter.anglican.org (full-time)

Katharine Otley

Website, Marketing and Publications Officer

01392 294904, 07719 957819

katharine.otley@exeter.anglican.org (works Tues-Fri)

Matt Prior

Multimedia Storyteller

01392 294966, 07704 155228

matt.prior@exeter.anglican.org (works Mon-Thurs)

For general enquiries and to send details of events, job adverts etc for uploading to the website, please email:

communications@exeter.anglican.org

Current Diocese of Exeter communications channels

- Diocese website (news, information, events, job vacancies and forms)
- Monthly four page magazine and prayer diary. Produced a month in advance and uploaded to the website for individuals/churches to print off: <https://exeter.anglican.org/who-we-are/magazine-prayer-diary/>
- Yearly calendar which serves as the annual report
- Weekly Roots e-news bulletin via Mailchimp. Sign up here: <https://exeter.anglican.org/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CofEDevon/> (including Facebook Live)
- Instagram: cofedevon

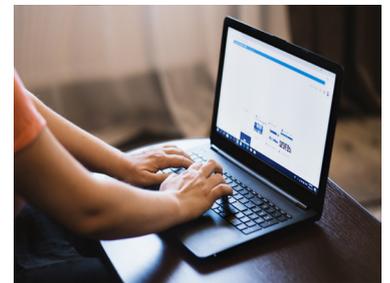


- Twitter: @cofedevon
- We produce bespoke videos for the website and social media: interviews, campaigns, events and more.
- We write articles and press releases.
- We provide media and communications advice and support to the bishops, clergy and diocesan staff.
- We work with the local and national media to ensure the Church of England in Devon is well-represented and good news stories are reaching a wide audience

How to share a good news story

Write a press release or news article:

- Try to let media know before an event has happened.
- Give it an eye-catching headline, not just Press Release!
- Always put the most interesting thing (top line) first.
- Write each sentence as a new paragraph.
- Keep it brief and informative. Remember to cover who/what/where/when/why
- Make sure it is accurate and truthful – do not make up quotes or facts!
- For examples of news writing look at: <https://exeter.anglican.org/news/>
- Include contact details so journalists can get in touch
- Include a photo or promotional video where possible (see tips on video)
- A quote or short video interview will help to bring the story to life.
- Send it to your local paper, parish magazine and Devon Live website: newsdesk@devonlive.com,
- Send it to communications@exeter.anglican.org : we can then forward it to other media or offer advice on how to 'sell' the story.



Planning and publicising events

Make your event newsworthy:

Try to plan events that are visually interesting, a bit unusual, involve interesting people or ordinary people in an interesting way. It doesn't have to involve lots of money or a lot of time – just a bit of creativity.

Trail it on social media:

Use a series of posts leading up to the event. There is advice on social media below.

Design a good flyer, publicity poster or social media advert:

Canva is a great free-to-use design website with loads of templates for flyers etc: <https://www.canva.com/>

Katharine Otley in the Communications Team can advise on use of Canva.



Social Media

Social media provides a great opportunity to engage with our communities and show the church is relevant to their lives. 98% of internet users use social media. 40% of people use social media to research a brand (ie a church).

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. NB: Children are not allowed a Facebook account before the age of 13 but they can still help create material for a church Facebook page or Instagram etc.

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 stationary so people will connect the building they walk past every

day with the page they have browsed on Facebook or Instagram. The Communications team can advise on this.

It is also worth considering what you call your church on social media. Is it best to go for the official name (ie St Mary and St Paul's Church, Little Chuntering) or what people call it locally (Chuntering Church)? If you are in a benefice is there 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 the internet are on Facebook. A page is better for churches than a group. Facebook is a great way to reach parents, young people and grandparents.



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.

Twitter is popular with church leaders, local organisations and political groups. It is worth being on but has less general reach than Facebook. Make sure you are not just using it for 'virtue-signalling'. Around 25% of social media users are on Twitter.

Here is a **useful checklist** 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>

Figures from Church of England Communications Office.

Facebook tips

- See Facebook as an interactive community noticeboard. Don't just put up 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 (but make sure you have permission from anyone in the photo and written consent from parents of children under 16).
- Share nice photos from events (or photos/videos preparing for events – ie people making Christingles to advertise your Christingle service.)
- Don't expect people to just follow links to your website. Include a link but make sure all the basic information is easy to read in the post.
- Try filming a promotional video (maybe the Vicar inviting people to the Sunday service, volunteers setting up the church fete, a trial-run of the teddy zip-wire off the church tower etc!) Give it a go. If you aren't happy with it you can always try it again.
- Try to film interviews somewhere more interesting than the church office.
- Make sure you have permission to use any images, music etc and don't infringe copyright.
- Try making a nice 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 to the page with a comment or write new posts from scratch.
- Where appropriate, show the church has something to say about global or local events (ie climate change, Brexit, plans to close the local library etc).
- 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 (although you can delete them).
- Make sure you check your page for comments or questions regularly.

- Try to have a few people as administrators/editors on the 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 five minutes, once or twice a week would be enough to start with.

Getting some help

The Church of England Communications team produce a fantastic monthly newsletter with loads of tips on making the most of social media. You can sign-up here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/digital-labs>

They also run social media training events. The diocese Communications team can also run social media training for your Benefice or Mission Community.

Measuring your success

Here is a helpful guide to measuring your social media engagement (known as analytics)

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/digital-labs/labs-learning-blog/how-show-value-social-media-your-church>

Social Media guidelines

The Church of England has published social media advice aimed at tackling offensive behaviour and misleading content and encouraging a positive atmosphere for online conversations.

The guidelines were launched by the Archbishop of Canterbury: <https://www.churchofengland.org/terms-and-conditions/our-social-media-community-guidelines>

Digital Charter

The Church is also urging Christians to sign up to a voluntary digital charter aimed at fostering a more positive atmosphere online:

- **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'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.

Social Media Policy for clergy and church office holders

- If you comment on any aspect of the work of the organisation or any policy issue for the organisation, you must clearly identify yourself as a member of the clergy within the organisation in your postings or blog site(s).
- When leaving comments on other blogs or posts, if the original subject is related to the Church of England or the Diocese of Exeter then the person posting their comment must identify themselves and their connection with the Church of England or the Diocese.
- It is your responsibility to be aware of and to follow the Diocese of Exeter's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. This includes the transmission and publication of images of young people. Please contact the Safeguarding team for advice or with any concerns.
- You must be clear about who you are. When discussing topics relevant to the Church of England or the Diocese of Exeter, 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, 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.
- Those who fail to take the Diocesan Policy into account may face disciplinary measures if it is deemed an act of gross misconduct.

This social media guidelines page from the Diocese of Gloucester also has lots of helpful advice: <https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/parish-resources/communications/social-media-guidelines/>

Websites

Your church may have a fantastic website, one you despair of or none at all!



There are simple website building platforms to set up a new website, for example, Wordpress.

There are local courses you can do and tutorials online.

A Church Near You

The Church of England has also created A Church Near You
<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/>

It is an online tool to help people search for their local church and try it out.

Each church in England automatically has its own page.

There is also a new benefice function.

It is free and easy to edit and the CofE is encouraging churches and benefices to use it as their main website.

It is possible to link your existing church website to this – so anyone searching for your existing website address would get automatically re-directed to your A Church Near You page.

Here is some more information about it: <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-england-digital-labs/labs-learning/why-your-church-should-be-using-church>

Website Top Tips

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

We are committed to the highest standards of safeguarding for all. If you have a concern about the safety of someone or the actions of someone working with children or vulnerable adults, please speak to someone:

Benefice Safeguarding Representative: (INSET NAME AND NUMBER)

Click here to download our Safeguarding Policy

Exeter Diocese Safeguarding Team's contact details - <https://exeter.anglican.org/resources/safeguarding/safeguarding-team/>

If you are a young person and you feel unhappy about something happening to you, you can call Childline on 0800 11 11.

You can contact Katharine Otley in the Communications team for advice on websites and A Church Near You:

katharine.otley@exeter.anglican.org

Dealing with broadcast and print media

If you or your church is approached by the media please do not offer comment but contact the Diocese of Exeter Communications team for advice: **01392 294905**.

Your Archdeacon's office may also be able to help.

NB: If the local paper calls up asking about the time and location of the annual church fete etc it is obviously fine to speak to them!

Chloe Axford, Communications Director, is very happy to talk through media requests, draft statements and do interview training for clergy and lay staff or volunteers. Most local media outlets are understaffed and hungry for stories, so most of the time they just want to do a nice interview with you and not give you a grilling! It is also generally possible to turn most negative stories into a positive or limit the damage.

Note from Chloe: If you are dealing with a situation, event in your past or other matter which you are worried may become of media interest, I am very happy to have a confidential chat with you about it. Just email me: chloe.axford@exeter.anglican.org or give me a call 07889 523776.

Live Streaming and using video in church newsletters and Sunday services

More and more churches are using live streaming (via Facebook or other platforms) as a way of broadcasting their Sunday services or sharing life events with family and friends (for example a wedding or funeral where some relatives are abroad). Facebook live is also a great way to tell people that an event is about to take place or show them what they are missing.

Other churches produce video news bulletins in lieu of their Sunday notices. These can be played in church, shared on social media and emailed in a weekly newsletter. If you would like to speak to someone about live streaming, Facebook live, or news bulletins please contact Matt Prior from the Communications team: matt.prior@exeter.anglican.org

Finally – 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@exeter.anglican.org
Or call 01392 294905

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