Penwortham St Mary
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, **X** (formally 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.

- St Mary's 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.
- St Mary's will adhere to the Church of England's guidelines in our use of social media and the best practice guidelines.
- St Mary's will also adhere to the guidelines set out in Section 4 of the Church of England Safer Environment and Activity Guidance 2019
- St Mary's will not publish images of children and young people under 18 online without written parental permission. Young people aged 16-18 must also give their permission.
- Any safeguarding concerns that arise will be reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officer and Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.
- 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 Blackburn, 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/s. Any posts that could be considered controversial must therefore be approved by the incumbent or the PCC before publishing.

The PCC has reviewed and approved the use of social media by St Mary's.

Approved by PCC meeting of: 27th October 2026

[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.