



Midsomer Norton Methodist Church Social Media Policy

Our Mission is to reflect God's love in everything we do, so that others may be drawn to faith in Christ.

Our Vision

We are a welcoming, enthusiastic and growing Christian community that seeks to:

***H – Holy Spirit** - Be guided by God's Holy Spirit, seeking renewal and wholeness for all*

***O – Offer** - Offer living, vibrant and relevant worship to God*

***P – Passionate** - Serve God locally and in the wider world, caring passionately and challenging injustice.*

***E- Eager** - Be courageous in discipleship and eager to share the joy of the Father's love in Jesus.*

General guidelines for all who use social media

Based on those from the Methodist Church Website

A healthy Christian community is a safe place of mutual care, where all people feel valued, loved and respected.

These guidelines for engaging on social media reflect those values.

These guidelines apply to all content and comments posted to Methodist Church social media channels, whether by the administrators or those responding to posts.

Midsomer Norton Methodist Church and individuals are encouraged to adopt these guidelines for their own social media channels and personal social media engagement.

Why use social media?

The Methodist Church encourages the use of social media tools as a means of extending our engagement with people inside and outside the church. This includes

- Sharing our stories
- Engaging in conversations 'where people are'
- Sharing, learning and encouraging
- Reaching those who cannot physically attend church
- Forming and deepening relationships locally and globally

Five main social media principles

Respect

Do not post or share content that is sexually explicit, inflammatory, hateful, abusive, threatening or otherwise disrespectful. Try to think of the effect on others who may see what you post.

Be transparent

Don't mislead people about who you are, or use pseudonyms.

Disagree with love

If you have a criticism you need to make, consider carefully the tone of what you write. If you are personally attacked, do not respond in kind. Being a Christian means that sometimes we must speak out and challenge injustice. But remember when you need to point out something you think is wrong, that there is a real, and possibly vulnerable, person at the receiving end of what you say. Consider whether conversations are best done on the social media platform or separately in person/by telephone or email.

Be careful when sharing content

Don't share in haste. Read linked content thoroughly, or watch a video to the end so you know exactly what you are sharing, before you judge whether it is suitable to share.

Maintain confidentiality

If telling a story about someone else, ask yourself first 'Is this my story to tell?' Don't reveal personal details about others without their explicit permission.

Our responsibilities

If the administrators on the Midsomer Norton Methodist Church's social media accounts deem comments (or other content) that are posted to the Midsomer Norton Methodist Church social media accounts or pages to be unsuitable or offensive, we will take action that may include hiding, deleting or reporting comments, or blocking users.

These guidelines will be reviewed annually at the Church Council meeting in July and updated in light of feedback and experience. If you have questions or suggestions, please email digitaloutreach@msnmcc.org



Social Media Policy for Midsomer Norton Methodist Church

This policy covers the actions of Midsomer Norton Methodist Church employees, officers and those operating the social media accounts for the church, while acting on behalf of Midsomer Norton Methodist Church.

Introduction:

Midsomer Norton Methodist Church recognises that many people make positive use of social media for ministry and mission purposes and in a personal capacity as well. Whether acting on behalf of the church, or in a personal capacity, we must be aware that damage can be done to our mission if the work we do is not safe and respectful. This policy aims to ensure that where we use social media we are, as in all other areas of our work, ensuring that safeguarding is central to the mission of the church.

Purpose:

To contribute to the active mission of the church and to support the social media presence, and online witness, of Midsomer Norton Methodist Church, in order to make more disciples of Jesus Christ.

Objectives:

- a) To maintain an active church profile on main social media platforms.
- b) To spread the good news of Christ to online spaces.
- c) To promote the online work of the Methodist Church in Britain.
- d) To develop new online aspects of church life that are safe and effective.

As a Church we commit to the following:

1. It is essential that all our online and Social Media work is carried out according to the latest Methodist Church in Britain Connexional guidance or policy. The church social media guidance will be amended accordingly in such a situation.
2. We will use, and promote the use of, social media, alongside other media, for the sharing of good news, helpful resources and communications that encourage the mission of the church.
3. Any communication made through digital and social media should:
 - not bring the Methodist Church into disrepute
 - not breach confidentiality nor copyright
 - not do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual or group
 - not contain content or images that are discriminatory or offensive (or links to such content)
 - not be abusive or threatening or sexual or inappropriate in nature (or links to such content)
4. Responsibility for oversight of digital and social media communications and reputation management primarily lies with the Digital Outreach Worker.
5. Our guidance for the content of our social media will include:
 - a) We will keep within the core subject of the particular group, or the core mission of the Methodist Church
 - b) Posts about activities or issues that are not specifically Christian in nature are permissible if they are of help to the work of the Midsomer Norton Methodist Church.

- c) Each person posting is accountable to the church for the things they do, say or write on church social media.
- d) Text and images shared can be public and permanent, even with privacy settings in place and so we expect contributors to show respect for all people, and to generate good conversations. If you're not sure, don't post it.

Consider the safety of yourself and others

It is important that the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults especially, must be maintained. Please read the *Children and Youth social media and communications guidance for churches*.

If you have a safeguarding concern, please inform the church's Safeguarding Officer (Judith Knight) or District Safeguarding Officer.

Conversation on social media can sometimes develop into heated and pointless argument. Be aware of the effect on yourself, and don't feel you always need to engage. You can always 'sign off' from a heated conversation calmly, with something like 'I think we'll have to agree to disagree. Peace.'

The administrators will reserve the right to delete posts.

Administration:

1. There will be a minimum of 3 administrators for each social media platform, with a member of the Midsomer Norton Methodist Church leadership team being one of these.
2. Administrators for any Midsomer Norton Methodist Church social media channels will be appointed by the Digital Outreach Worker's Management Group and recruited according to safeguarding principles. A member of the Digital Outreach Worker's Management Group will always be one of the administrators of each church social media platform, for safeguarding monitoring and advice.
3. Passwords for the accounts will be shared with at least two church members (Digital Outreach Worker and ideally a member of the Digital Outreach Worker's Management Group)

Confidentiality

Respecting confidentiality should not be problematic in this new area. The existence of social media does not change the Church's understanding of confidentiality. Within the life of the Church, there are private or closed meetings, private conversations and confidential matters. All involved have a right to expect others will respect that confidentiality. Breaking confidentiality in social media is as wrong as it would be in any other context. If a confidence is broken, it can spread via social networking with alarming speed and will be impossible to retract. It may be prudent therefore, to ensure those attending sensitive meetings or briefings understand the restrictions placed upon the sharing of that information. The Methodist Church Report 'Guidelines for Good Practice in Confidentiality and Pastoral Care' forms the basis of any matter relating to confidentiality.

Uploading photographs and videos.

- Photographs and video should never be taken during church services without the permission of the minister/preacher.
- Photographs and video should never be uploaded without the permission of the individuals involved.

- Photographs and video should never be uploaded which could misrepresent, embarrass, or compromise the individuals involved.
- Do not photograph or video children without following the *Children and Youth social media and communications guidance for churches*.
- Photographs should never identify children & young by naming them in any comments/captions.

Other areas of consideration:

- Respect copyright
- Respect libel and defamation laws.
- Never provide details of confidential matters or the performance of groups.
- When you do make a reference, link back to the source. Don't publish anything that might allow inferences to be drawn that could embarrass or damage an individual.
- Respect your audience. Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in a Christian environment.
- Don't use Church or Methodist Church logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. If you do use them, please obtain the correct permissions and follow brand guidelines from the Digital Outreach Worker.
- Users' social media communications are made in their personal capacity and not on behalf of Midsomer Norton Methodist Church. Statements made by members of the church community should not be taken as expressing the formal position of Midsomer Norton Methodist Church unless the writer is specifically authorized to do so by the Minister.
- Remember that whatever is written will reflect on the life and work of Midsomer Norton Methodist Church and will give an impression on those engaging for the first time. It should be positive, helpful and loving.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Midsomer Norton Methodist Church safeguarding policy, Children and Youth social media and communications guidance for churches and with the latest Methodist Church in Britain guidance. Any updates of this policy and guidance will become the relevant ones at any time, as authorised by the Church Council.