



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A guide for using social media to promote the work of Bents Green Methodist Church ("the Church") and in a personal capacity

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. Bents Green Methodist Church will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

Date of last review: 20 November 2024

Introduction

What is social media?

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video content), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn and Instagram.

Why do we use social media?

Social media is useful for members of the Church to participate in relevant conversations and engage with the community, for example in advertising Church events.

Why do we need a social media policy?

The Charity Commission guidance states that all charities should have a social media policy.

Point of contact for social media

Christele Hall is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, speak to Christele Hall. Any other member of the Church Council can also post content on Bents Green Methodist Church's official channels (ask Christele Hall for security access to do this).

Which social media channels do we use?

Bents Green Methodist Church uses the following social media channel:

www.facebook.com/BentsGreenChurch

The Church's facebook page is our primary use of social media. Content is posted and monitored by Christele Hall.

Some Church activities also have a 'facebook group' specifically aimed at those that attend that activity – currently there are facebook groups for Sunrise and Sunbeams. The Sunbeams facebook group is monitored by Katie Vernon. The Sunrise facebook group is monitored by Emma Wassell. Leaders of other Church activities are also welcome to set up and monitor their own groups.

The Church may expand to use other social media channels in the future. The Church also uses Whatsapp, although this is not always considered a social media platform.

Guidelines

General Guidelines

Those involved in posting or moderating content on behalf of Bents Green Methodist Church will ensure they:

1. Reflect our values in what they post.
2. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and accurately reflects Bents Green Methodist Church's agreed position.
3. Answer questions within reasonable timescales and respond to comments where appropriate.

4. Have the consent of a parent or guardian before using on social media any interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person.
5. Refrain from offering personal opinions via Bents Green Methodist Church's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If in doubt about Bents Green Church's position on a particular issue, please speak to the Leadership Team.
6. Obtain all relevant rights for usage before publishing material.

Bents Green Church will also aim to follow all guidelines on social media use set by The Methodist Church, which can be found here: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/guidance-for-churches/digital-communication-guidance-for-churches/social-media/social-media-guidelines/#:~:text=Do%20not%20post%20or%20share,abusive%2C%20threatening%20or%20otherwise%20disrespectful.>

Guidelines on politics

Bents Green Church is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We have every right to express views on policy, including the policies of parties, but we can't tell people how to vote.

Guidelines on dealing with complaints or crisis situations

If a complaint is made on Bents Green Methodist Church's social media channels, users should seek advice from the Leadership Team before responding.

Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the charity's reputation. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity.

Christele Hall regularly monitors any 'tags' of the Bents Green Methodist Church facebook page so we can catch any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis situation, she will flag to the Leadership Team.

If any volunteers become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on Bents Green Methodist Church's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to Christele Hall or any member of the Leadership Team immediately.

Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflicts might arise. Bents Green Methodist Church's staff and volunteers are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with our values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive Bents Green Methodist Church. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of Bents Green Methodist Church. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about Bents Green Methodist Church's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent Bents Green Methodist Church's positions, policies or opinions."
2. Never use Bents Green Methodist Church's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from Christele Hall.
3. Always protect yourself and the charity. Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully.

4. We encourage volunteers to share tweets and posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support Bents Green Methodist Church and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage volunteers to do this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile.

Copyright law

It is critical that all staff and volunteers abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

Protection and intervention

The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. For example, Facebook. However, if a staff member considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to Christele Hall immediately.

Under 18s and vulnerable people

Young and vulnerable people face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18-years-old via social media, staff and volunteers should ensure the online relationship with Bents Green Methodist Church follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Where appropriate, staff and volunteers should ensure that young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online, and given guidance on security/privacy settings as necessary. Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy.