

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 Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, unveiled the Church's first ever social media guidelines at Facebook today. [The guidelines](#) encourage positive engagement across all national social media accounts run by the Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York.

At the same time the Church is urging Christians and others to [sign up to a voluntary digital charter](#) aimed at fostering a more positive atmosphere online.

As part of a live Q&A at Facebook UK's Headquarters, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, launched the digital charter and guidelines and encouraged Christians and others to sign up to it.

The charter is centred on the five principles of: truth, kindness, welcome, inspiration and togetherness, and the opportunity for people to sign-up to show they support the principles.

It is hoped that people of all faiths and none will use the charter to consider how their own online interactions can affect others, both for good and bad.

Archbishop Justin Welby said: "Social media has transformed the way we live our lives. As Christians we are called to engage in a way which is shaped by the example of Jesus.

"As we respond to the call on each of us to be witnesses to Jesus Christ, I encourage all of us to consider how we live our lives as witnesses online.

"Each time we interact online we have the opportunity either to add to currents of cynicism and abuse or to choose instead to share light and grace.

"My prayer is that through these guidelines and charter we can encourage regular and not-so-regular churchgoers, sceptics and those who are surprised to find themselves interested, to be open to think and experience more of the Christian faith."

The charter and guidelines also have the backing of the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, who said: "While there is a time and a place for complaint and criticism, too often today this takes place not to encourage improvement but to vilify an individual or group. Sometimes it's about counting to 10 and asking whether a spiteful statement on social media will change a situation for the better.

"Today, we are saying that the Church wishes to be present in the digital sphere, and the same force for social cohesion which it strives to be in the real world, and we want to work alongside social media companies in their work to make social media a safe and enlightening space for all."

Read the [social media guidelines](#) and [sign up to our charter](#).

Notes to Editors

The difference between the charter and guidelines

- The community guidelines have been created to encourage conversations that reflect our values. They apply to all content posted by the public on the national social media accounts run by the Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York.
- The charter is a voluntary pledge that we're suggesting individual Christians as well as churches sign to help make social media and the web more widely positive places for conversations to happen.

The Church of England Digital Team

The Church of England established a Digital team in October 2016 to harness the considerable opportunities that digital and social media bring. The first two and a half years have seen several key successes: the transformation of the [Church's national website](#), with a 20% uplift in page views; the relaunch of [A Church Near You](#), our local church finder, which saw a 50% uplift in traffic in December 2017 from December 2016; a successful Christmas 2018 #FollowTheStar Advent and Christmas campaign that had a reach and engagement of 7.94 million; LentPilgrim and EasterPilgrim 2019 campaign that reached 6.9 million; launching an Alexa smart speaker skill asked more than 75,000 questions in the first year; and winning 15 national industry awards for the work so far.

The Archbishop of Canterbury on social media

The Archbishop of Canterbury has 137K followers on Twitter, 175K followers on Facebook, and 23K followers on Instagram. He was one of the first religious leaders to begin using Facebook Live in 2016. His live videos have received 3.8 million views since then, connecting with Christians and non-Christians around the world, including in the UK, USA, Nigeria, Uganda, Pakistan, India, Australia, Japan and many others.

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