

# **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

## **Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission, including the Museum of Methodism and John Wesley's House**

**A guide for staff and volunteers on using social media to promote the charitable work of Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission (WCLM) (including, for governance purposes, the Museum of Methodism and John Wesley's House) and in a personal capacity.**

**This policy will be reviewed by the Charity Trustees on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.**

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# 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, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

## Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating WCLM's work. It is important for some staff to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of WCLM's work.

## Why do we need a social media policy?

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to WCLM's work. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe. Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for all *staff members of all levels, volunteers and trustees*, and applies to content posted on both a WCLM device and a personal device. Before engaging in work-related social media activity, staff must read this policy.

## Setting out the social media policy

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of WCLM and the use of social media by staff in both a professional and personal capacity. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help staff support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

## Internet access and monitoring usage

There are currently no access restrictions to any of our social media sites in the WCLM office. However, when using the internet at work, it is important that during working hours on site staff and volunteers with internet access, access only content that is legal and appropriate for viewing by children and vulnerable adults, and exercise care about any content that might cause harm or distress if overheard or seen. Staff and volunteers should make reasonable and appropriate use of personal social media activity during lunch breaks. But usage should not be excessive and interfere with your duties. Staff should refer to line managers to discuss any particulars or concerns.

## Point of contact for social media

Our Leysian Missioner, Ministers, Administration and Heritage Staff, are 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 them. No other staff member can post content on WCLM's official channels without the permission of the Superintendent Minister or her deligate.

## Which social media channels do we use?

WCLM uses the following social media channels:

### Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/WesleysChapel> <https://www.facebook.com/museummethodism>

Our Facebook Account is used to share details of services and other activities, often illustrated in line with general photography Policy. The Audience is mostly members and friends of the chapel both within the congregation and internationally. Promoted posts (advertising) are also used to highlight the church to the city/ area more widely than those who have liked the page. A separate account is run to primarily highlight heritage activities, although there is some cross-posting when appropriate. Private messages are monitored in case of pastoral need being conveyed, but are not sought or advertised, however an automated reply system is used by default to acknowledge receipt.

X formerly known as Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/WesleysChapel>

<https://twitter.com/museummethodism>

Our X account is used to share details of services and other activities, often illustrated in line with general photography Policy. The Audience is mostly members and friends of the chapel both within the congregation and internationally. A separate account is run to primarily highlight heritage activities, although there is some cross-posting when appropriate. Private messages are monitored in case of pastoral need being conveyed, but are not sought or advertised.

Threads:

<https://www.threads.net/@wesleyschapel.lm>

Our Threads Account is used to share details of services and other activities, occasionally illustrated in line with general photography Policy. The Audience is mostly members and friends of the chapel both within the congregation and internationally. There is currently onlythr a Church-side account on this platform. Private messages are monitored in case of pastoral need being conveyed, but are not sought or advertised.

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/wesleyschapel.lm/>

Our Instagram is used to share details of services and other activities, illustrated in line with general photography Policy, often using photos edited with text added to improve conveyance of information. The Audience is mostly members and friends of the chapel both within the congregation and internationally. Private messages are monitored in case of pastoral need being conveyed, but are not sought or advertised.

Tiktok: [https://www.tiktok.com/@wesleyschapel\\_museum](https://www.tiktok.com/@wesleyschapel_museum)

Our Tiktok is used jointly by both the heritage and church sides of the chapel, rather than the separate ones used on other platforms. Owing to its nature videos are specifically taken for it, in line with policy, usually of services using a phone-based camera for church matters and with dedicated videos made for heritage matters. Private messages are monitored in case of pastoral need being conveyed, but are not sought or advertised.

## Guidelines

Using WCLM 's social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. the Leysian Missioner and Heritage staff (for Heritage sites) are responsible for setting up and managing WCLM's social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by the Superintendent Minister will have access to these accounts.
2. We expect to monitor content with reasonable attention (noting that we do not have dedicated staff or volunteer role for this) during the working hours of the Leysian Missioner (M-Th, Sunday 9.30-5.30) with posts scheduled as appropriate out of hours in advance; we expect reasonable attention from the Ministers and other staff out of hours. We do not currently monitor content or channels over

night or when staff are on leave; we expect to respond to any urgent situations that arise as we can on a case by case basis.

3. Be an ambassador for our brand. Staff should ensure they reflect WCLM values in what they post and use our tone of voice.

4. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for WCLM and accurately reflects WCLM's agreed position.

5. Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them

6. Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images.

7. Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.

8. If staff or volunteers outside of those named wish to contribute content for social media, whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, they should speak to the Leysian Missioner or Superintendent Minister about this.

9. Staff shouldn't post content about supporters or service users without their express permission. If staff are sharing information about supporters, service users or third party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from WCLM. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, staff must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.

10. Always check facts. Staff should not automatically assume that material is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation.

11. Be honest. Say what you know to be true or have a good source for. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.

12. Staff should refrain from offering personal opinions via WCLM 's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about WCLM 's position on a particular issue, please speak to the Superintendent Minister.

13. It is vital that WCLM does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.

14. Staff should not encourage people to break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material.

15. Staff should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of WCLM. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, WCLM can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.

16. WCLM 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.

17. If a complaint is made on WCLM 's social media channels, staff should seek advice from the Superintendent Minister or Methodist Connexional Comms Team before responding. If they are not

available, then staff should speak to the Methodist Connexional Comms Team duty officer, identified on the national church website.

18. 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. Examples might include: accusations against a member of staff, Church member, or volunteer. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity.

The staff with access regularly monitor our social media spaces for mentions of WCLM 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, the Administration, Heritage, and Pastoral team will do the following: take down any post or thread that is causing harm. Contact the Methodist Connexional Communications team via their website immediately, and as appropriate the Circuit and District Safeguarding Officer or Connexional Safeguarding staff. The District Chair or Officer should also be notified.

If any staff or volunteers outside of the named managers of the content become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on WCLM 's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the Leysian Missioner, Superintendent Minister, Curator, or failing these, Methodist Connexional Communications Officers 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. WCLM staff and volunteers are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with WCLM 's values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive WCLM. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of WCLM. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about WCLM work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent WCLM 's positions, policies or opinions."
2. Staff who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at WCLM should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and the Superintendent Minister]. Similarly, staff who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for WCLM discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and the Superintendent Minister.
3. Those in senior management, and specialist roles where they are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing WCLM 's view, including in work done for the BBC or other broadcaster, and in media news interviews or commissioned content.
4. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with WCLM and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the *general public, colleagues, partners and funders*.
5. WCLM works with high profile people, including *politicians*. Please don't approach high profile people from your personal social media accounts to ask them to support the charity, as this could hinder any potential relationships that are being managed by others. This includes asking for retweets about the charity.  
If you have any information about high profile people that have a connection to our cause, or if there is someone who you would like to support the charity, please speak to the Leysian Missioner to share the details.

7. If a staff member is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to WCLM, they should talk to the Superintendent Minister immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.

8. WCLM is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing WCLM staff are expected to hold WCLM's position of neutrality. Staff who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from WCLM, and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

9. Never use WCLM 's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the the Superintendent Minister.

10. 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. When you are using social media sites at work, it is important that you do so safely.

11. Think about your reputation as well as the charity's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be polite and the first to correct your own mistakes.

12. We encourage staff 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 WCLM and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage staff to do this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the relevant part of the organisation who will respond as appropriate.

## Further guidelines

### Libel

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether staff are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring WCLM into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

### Copyright law

It is critical that all staff 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.

### Confidentiality

Any communications that staff make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that WCLM is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date. Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy and Data Protection Policies for further information.

### **Discrimination and harassment**

Staff should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official WCLM social media channel or a personal account. For example:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- using social media to bully another individual
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content

### **Lobbying Act**

Charities are legally allowed to campaign to bring about a change in policy or law to further their organisational purpose. In most cases, spending on charity campaigns that are in accordance with charity law will not be regulated under electoral law. However, the Lobbying Act, which was passed in January 2014, states that during national elections (known as regulated periods) spending on campaigning activities may be regulated.

Charities which spend more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, during the regulated period, need to register with the Electoral Commission. To abide by the Lobbying Act, campaigning activities on social media must not be seen as intending to influence people's voting choice. During these periods, all campaigning activity will be reviewed by the Superintendent Minister and if appropriate, the Methodist Connexional Communications Team.

### **Use of social media in the recruitment process**

Recruitment should be carried out in accordance with the Safer Recruitment Policy, and associated procedures and guidelines. Any advertising of vacancies should be done through the Administration Team.

There should be no systematic or routine checking of candidate's online social media activities during the recruitment process, as conducting these searches might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics, such as religious beliefs or sexual orientation, played a part in a recruitment decision. This is in line with WCLM's Safer Recruitment Policy.

### **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 the Superintendent Minister and Circuit Safeguarding Officer 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 should ensure the online relationship with WCLM follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Staff 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. Staff should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the young person and WCLM content and other content is appropriate for them. Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy.



### **Responsibilities and breach of policy**

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of WCLM is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. For staff, breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Please refer to our Complaints and Discipline Policy for further information on disciplinary procedures. Staff who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Superintendent Minister.

### **Public Interest Disclosure**

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, if a staff member releases information through WCLM 's social media channels that is considered to be in the interest of the public, WCLM 's whistleblowing policy (appended to Safeguarding policy) must be initiated before any further action is taken.