Anglican-Lutheran Society

Social Media Policy

A guide for social media use for the Anglican-Lutheran Society (A-LS), approved by the Society's trustees on: 22nd September 2026

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year.

Next review due: First committee meeting after the Annual Meeting March 2027

Owner (Lead Trustee): The Rev Lagle Heinla

Introduction

Why do we use social media and what can we use it for?
The Anglican-Lutheran Society unites Anglicans (or Episcopalians in some countries). Social media are essential to the success of communicating our work; they support our mission which is to promote unity between Anglicans and Lutherans by sharing news, resources, and events, local engagement, and shared experience.

Social media helps us to:

- Promote our mission of grassroot ecumenical engagement through digital means
- Raise the Society's profile and increase our membership
- Interact with members and supporters, sharing our news and updates
- Encourage local ecumenical activities
- Raise awareness of important issues and challenges in our Churches
- Provide a platform for sharing ideas and stories from our communities

Why do we need a social media policy?
Social media is a fast-moving online world, where nuance and context can be easily lost. While social media brings the Society to a wide audience, it can also present risks. We want to ensure that our social media usage represents and reflects it in the best way possible. It is also important to mitigate risks (such as reputational or legal issues) associated with the use of social media to protect our work and reputation. The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media. Publication and commentary on social media carry obligations and is subject to the same laws as other kinds of publication or commentary in the public domain.

Which social media channels do we use?
The Society has Facebook and Instagram accounts, as well as website https://www.anglican-lutheran-society.org/

In addition to our main Facebook and Instagram accounts there are other accounts for regional branches of the Society's members and supporters. These have their own policies and account managers.

Social Media Code of conduct headlines

- I will champion the Society and its mission
- I will be respectful, inclusive, considerate and fair
- I will follow UK GDPR rules on publishing personal information or data
- I will respect copyright and privacy laws and seek consent when necessary
- I will not publish or share political content
- I will use plain language and avoid complex terminology or slang
- I will respond to others' opinions respectfully and professionally
- I will be factually accurate, acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly
- I will link to online references and original source materials directly
- I will be cautious of security threats and online scams
- If in doubt I will not post – I will check and seek advice from the Social Media Officer

Rules for using ALS social media channels

1. Who can post?
Only named persons, as agreed by the Committee, are authorised to access the accounts, change passwords and post or share others' posts.

The named persons form a team together with a volunteer ***Social media Officer*** appointed by the Trustees. The Social Media Office is the Rev Martin Steele, m.steele.1662@gmail.com

Members who wish to share material through social media accounts need to contact the named trustees and the Social media Officer.

2. Social Media Officer responsibilities:

- weekly moderation and interaction
- to agree the frequency of posting with the named persons
- to create and schedule posts (around Trustees' meetings, Newsletter schedule and events)
- to report to the Trustees on activities, statistics and advise of any necessary actions

3. Ensure brand consistency
Members or supporters must not create or manage any other social media channels, groups or pages on behalf of the Society without express permission from the named trustees and after appropriate training. This is to ensure brand consistency and the appropriate safeguarding and monitoring processes.

4. Obtain consent
Social media content about members, supporters or partners must have their consent. The Society's Safeguarding Policy must inform all posts involving children or young people or vulnerable adults. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, the consent of a parent or guardian must have been obtained before using them on social media.

If using third-party content, it should be clearly labelled so, for the audiences to know it has not come directly from the Society.

5. Remain politically neutral

The Anglican-Lutheran Society is a registered charity and is not associated with any political organisation and has no affiliation with or links to political parties. We can express views where appropriate on policies that impact our work and communities, but it is essential that the Society remains, and is seen to be, politically neutral.

We cannot endorse a political party or candidate. We must carefully manage the risk that we are perceived to have any party-political bias and should carefully consider any posts which might be perceived as such, for example, posts which talk about individual politicians or parties rather than policies.

6. Seek advice for complaints and external contacts

If a complaint is made on the Society's social media channels, seek advice from the named trustees in the first instance, before responding.

If contacted by the press about the Society's social media posts, contact the named trustees immediately and under no circumstances respond directly. If they are not available, then contact any other trustee.

In case of crisis, e.g. account hacking or if any member suspects malicious activities, the named trustees should be contacted immediately.

7. Legal Terms

Defamation

Defamation is when a false statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published in print (such as in media publications) or online (such as Instagram Story, Facebook Live).

Copyright law

Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 means that those posting material will never use or adapt someone else's images, photos 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 through social media channels must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that the Society is not yet ready to disclose.

Discrimination and harassment

No content shall be posted that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either on one of the Society's official ALS social media channels or a personal account. Such content will include, 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.

Accessibility

We endeavour to ensure our social media is as accessible as possible by*:*

- Using plain English, accessible fonts and avoiding small text sizes
- Using contrasting colours
- Using subtitles where appropriate
- Explaining text contained in an image in the copy that accompanies it

Further external guidance

- The Charity Commission guidance for charities on social media
- National Cyber Security Centre's guidance on social media and how to use it safely
- National Cyber Security Centre's guidance on protecting your published content
- The Charity Commission guidance on campaigning and political activity guidance for charities
- Government guidance on the Online Safety Bill