



SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

This guidance note gives guidance to ringers, parochial church councils and clergy regarding external factors that may affect the ringing of church bells. In this case, this guidance note covers social media.

As most of the ringing towers in the world come under the jurisdiction of the Church of England, it has been produced with this in mind. However, most of the principles addressed will apply to Churches of other denominations and also those outside the UK. It is recommended that, if needed, more specific local advice should be sought.

The widespread use of social networking applications brings the opportunity to communicate with ringing friends and wider audiences through the internet. This technology should, however, be used responsibly ensuring that individuals, ringing societies and the Exercise as a whole are not compromised nor that legal responsibilities are infringed.

Anyone using social networking sites and tools should be aware that statements, assertions or innuendo about named individuals or organisations can have an adverse reputational effect on those so named and could also lead to actions for libel or invasion of privacy. Use of electronic media in a damaging way carries the same penalties as the written word and may result in fines, prosecution and imprisonment. Personal attacks and harassment are covered by the Protection of Harassment Act 1997 and, from November 2012, there is a specific offence of stalking. In order to avoid such situations the following safeguards are recommended:

- Do not openly criticise, discredit or allude to individuals or organisations on networking sites or other internet forums generally publicly accessible.
- Do not use the public network sites to raise grievances, complaints or problems which should be dealt with by available and private channels.
- Within ringing organisations, use of society websites should be professional and not used for personal adverse comment and those responsible for controlling such sites should exercise vigilance over postings.

For further information, contact the Chairman of the CCCBR Tower Stewardship Committee:

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Other **Guidance Notes** produced by the Tower Stewardship Committee are:-

GN1 - Insurance

GN2 - Tower Management

GN3 - Child Protection In Towers

GN4 – Tower Safety and Risk Assessment

GN5 - Church Law

GN6 - Fire Risk Assessment and Protection

GN7 – Noise, the Law, and the Environmental Health Officer

GN8 – Data Protection and Bell Ringing

These Guidance Notes can be downloaded free of charge from the Tower Stewardship Committee section of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers website:

www.cccb.org.uk/towerstewardship