

Communicating our Message, Telling Our Stories



Your Guide to Communications in the Diocese of Salisbury

Renewing **HOPE**
Pray • Serve • Grow



Introduction

As communicators we are serving and resourcing the local church, inspiring and encouraging a continued thriving Christian presence. You are all our biggest tool, you are our people and our stories and these are our assets. It is through our outward facing mission, by showing who we are, what we do and the joy of Christ, that we will not just PRAY and SERVE, but also GROW.



The Diocese of Salisbury Diocese is a shared community identity. Serving a million people from the M4 to the Jurassic Coast, Parishioner, Pupil, Teacher, Laity, Minister, Parish, School, Benefice, MAT, Deanery, Archdeaconry, Bishops, Church House, South Canonry or DEC – we are all “Diocese.”

But whether we walk, drive, sail or ride, our churches are visible landmarks to all and they play an increasingly large part in community life. As a Diocese we are grounded in the places we serve and this has become even more apparent during the pandemic.

So it is this shared history, alongside our Diocesan values and priorities, which our Communications cannot just reflect but must also invite engagement with at every level, especially in these unprecedented times.

The way people engage and interact with the Church and faith has certainly changed over time and this has been exacerbated by Covid. Our communication toolkit has therefore had to change to accommodate this, but still at the heart of how we can engage is storytelling.

The big story is known through our little stories and at heart our communications will be about telling our stories in inviting and engaging ways that inform, educate and entertain.

“Our stories matter, each and every one of them, because they reach towards the big story, of a God who creates us, and to whom we are reconciled through the cross and who promises us redemption in his kingdom.”

Revd Dr Tim Gibson, 'Flourishing Rural Church'

Our role is to communicate our key messages and resources, our achievements, our initiatives and our faith, all lived out in our parishes, schools and communities, and to offer support and equipping for our key stakeholders in the area of good communications.

Our task is to shape and deliver the ongoing communication of our Diocesan Vision – **Renewing Hope: Pray, Serve, Grow** – and engage our audiences, both internal and external, with our key priorities of discipleship and evangelism, dynamic collaboration and leadership, and the transforming of lives and communities.

Our goal is to ensure that we communicate to all in the Diocese, and those joining it from elsewhere, growing in confidence in God and responding to the challenges of the age. We encourage engagement, well beyond broadcast, with our priorities, with key messaging and with stories that illustrate lives lived through our widening vision, enabling us to grow.



Our Audience

Our audience is potentially vast (there are nearly a million people in our Diocese) and encompasses an immense range of stakeholders from nearly 600 ordained clergy and 1,300 licenced laity to those in our pews and beyond. Across our range of platforms we can reach nearly 7,000 of these weekly.

The vast majority of our regular Churchgoers are over 18 and there are almost equal numbers of those aged between 18 and 69 (41%) and those over 70 years (42%). Just 17% of under 18s in our Diocese come to church. This profile is certainly reflected in the present audience for our communications.

While we have a high proportion of As Bs and C1 social grades throughout the Diocese, those areas of social deprivation are mainly Ds and Es. The age and social economic split in our congregations and the corresponding split in channel usage by these demographics requires a flexible approach in how we communicate our message.

Also, whilst focusing our efforts online to communication to our children and young people, the “replenisher” generation, the “millenniums” and those over 65s who are embracing new technology, we must be mindful that this does not exclude those for whom the welcome table, pew sheet notices and sermon will be the source of their church news.

And while these percentages make up a worshipping community of over 29,000 people, this is just over 3% of the total population and only 5% of the Christian population. Before Covid we saw just 2% of the population in church on a Sunday* (*Church of England 2018 Mission Statistics*), but online worship has seen community engagement with worship rise substantially.

This means our reach and influence has to extend beyond the pews if we are to encourage a wider engagement with our priorities and vision for growth.

Our audience segmentation has a simple first stage breakdown:

1. Targeted internal.

These are our Diocesan personnel, ministers, lay workers, PCC officers and churchwardens, chaplains, governors and head teachers etc. Their details are collated on SALDIMS and so we have a contact list that allows us to target our communication to them.

Targeted internal can be broken down into a variety of clearly defined sub groups (which can overlap), and these can be engaged through internal based communication.

2. Less targeted external and internal.

These are the wider congregations, communities, schools, local and national media and other organisations and affiliated charities.

The Less Targeted external and Internal, still offers scope to identify and engage wider but still specific audiences by age, locale or faith.

Communication & Engagement Focus

Our Present Communication and Engagement Tools:

- Website
- Weekly Grapevine e-news
- Monthly Working Together - internal newsletter - and the ad hoc In Brief
- Social Media, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- OntheVine – Podcasts (Soundcloud) and Video
- Videos (YouTube, Facebook Video)
- Galleries (Flickr)
- Face to face

Engagement by All

Key to successful communications is its uses and participation in it by all. “Telling Diocesan Communications” what you are doing should not be an afterthought, but a key part of your parish and deanery communications.

Storytelling

Our storytelling through social media and our weekly and monthly online publications provides a drip, drip feed that allows us to engage beyond broadcast with our audiences.

So how do we do it?



Our website

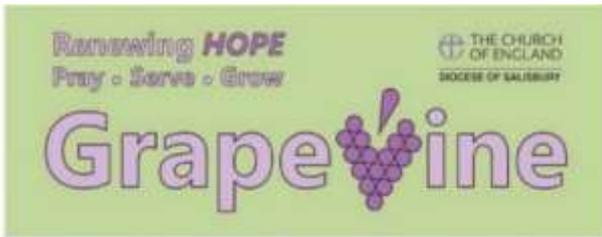
We know our website is not fit for purpose and plans are underway to update it by the end of 2021.

We have already carried out an extensive audit of the current site and its usage, gathering feedback on what our parishes need from a Diocesan website in preparation for the upgrade now forming part of a wider and ongoing IT upgrade programme led by the DBF.

Our analysis has identified two key audiences for our Diocesan website – “Users” and “Browsers” – and this audience has risen by 22% since 2018.

Google Analytics shows us that in 2020 these audiences engaged with the website’s content over 224,000 times. The main areas visited are our jobs section and our news content.

A news story (accessed directly, via Grapevine, or via social media) can gain nearly 1,000 views overall. And while we know that people go back and forth between stories via Grapevine – our top story of 2020 with nearly 28,000 views was ‘Light a Candle of Hope’ on 19th March.



Grapevine – for weekly news and internal/ external communications

This, along with its social media links, is the most important channel to reach and engage with our internal and external audiences in the shared vision and story of the Diocese.



This successful story-led format has seen a doubling of engagement since its relaunch in January 2019, with 53% of our audience clicking to download pictures and 30% clicking through to the story on our website. Very impressive when compared with the global benchmarks for similar publications of 20% engagement and click rate of 3%.

As well as being delivered to over 8,000 subscribers each week, it is shared externally through our website and Facebook page, which can generate over 2,000 likes and shares on big stories.

Unafraid of life in the margins

"You cannot sum up the work that the Mother's Union do in a few short words - one of the largest organisations in the Diocese, they give assured and genuine welcome, and are unafraid of life the margins. Wonderful people!" [Read more from incoming Chaplain Jo Naish...](#)

It also boosts the coverage in local media of these items, as they are often lifted directly from our feeds. At present, we average media interest in 2-3 of these stories every week.



Our top story of 2020, 'Worship may return to our buildings', was viewed by over 1,000 people after it was uploaded on 27th June.

Grapevine is there to encourage parish and school participation in the wider Diocesan narrative. It provides shared stories of Renewing Hope - Pray Serve Grow, encouraging peer to peer and inspiration learning. It allows us to share experience and learning, good practice, and fresh expressions of church.

Through this we also demonstrate how we are living out our widening and refreshed vision of Renewing Hope, and promote our ideals, vision and change, through example and message.

We Will Remember Them

What better commemoration than in parishes' and schools' own words and pictures?

[Click here for Twitter](#)
[and here for Facebook](#)

Your stories, shared through Grapevine, provide engagement well beyond broadcast to a wide

community based audience and we ask you to complete the loop by encouraging you to download or share this content in your own communication media.



Welcome to Working Together.

You are receiving this monthly internal communication because you play a key role in the ministry and mission of our Diocese. **Working Together** helps you to keep informed and engaged with the priorities, values and initiatives of our Diocese and the wider Church of England, delivering [practical resourcing](#) for our 'Renewing Hope - Pray Serve Grow' programme.

A Thriving Christian Presence

As a Diocese we want to ensure a continued and thriving Christian presence in all our communities, large and small. Our parishes and empowering the work of those who serve in them is crucial to this vision.



Former Head of Crime joins our Safeguarding Team

From January we will be welcoming a new member to our Diocesan Safeguarding Team. Jeremy Carter, who was a Detective Superintendent Head of Crime with Wiltshire Police joins us as a Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, sharing the role with Heather Bland who will be reducing her hours in the role. [Read more](#)

Working Together – for monthly internal communication

This internal e-format communication was also launched in September 2019 and is sent out monthly to everyone on our SALDIMS database, with the exception of school leaders and governors (at the request of the DBE).

This publication allows targeted information to be delivered to all clergy, lay ministers and church officers within our Diocese, focusing in on our key Diocesan priorities as well as a way to deliver the “accessible, imaginative and innovative resources” suggested by Bishop John as a key recommendation in his Review.

It aims to draw this audience into an understanding of our story and vision, while supporting and resourcing those already in ministry in our Diocese. It will be used to communicate our priorities and values and resourcing and enabling them to become integral to parish and school life.

From Budget and Strategy, through to Safeguarding and CMD, this is an ideal communications tool to deliver vision and practical resourcing for our Vision of Renewing Hope - Pray Serve.

The content of Working Together engages around 60% of its target audience. That might not seem impressive but, like Grapevine, this is way above the global benchmark.

In 2020, as part of our Covid communications, we added an ad hoc 'In Brief' publication to this portfolio, to deliver key messaging promptly to church officers.



Social Media

With the pandemic, our digital presence across the Diocese from parish to Diocesan level has become even more important to our engagement. But we also acknowledge that there is digital poverty in parts of our Diocese.

Facebook

The biggest social media platform used by both our internal and external audiences is Facebook, which allows us to reach a wide variety of both ordained and lay ministers, congregations, the local media and a wider unspecified audience that includes non-churchgoers. This has been very important during the pandemic, although we have been tethered by the speed of the delivery of national guidance.

We have high engagement and good reach (often 2,000+) through posts and through sharing the posts of others both churches and individuals. Stories from the Church of England, parishes or media can add value. We have also identified the best times of day to engage our audience on Facebook (9.00 am – 9.00 pm!).

The recent inclusion of web news stories from our weekly output has encouraged our audience to engage with our website through this has proved a huge success. Sharing our stories drives traffic to our website, encourages best practice, and allows us to garner feedback. It has also allowed us to share our stories with a wider audience engaging with local media in a way that is far more effective than the sending out of standard media releases.

We have also begun to develop shareable content through the visual revamping of our “Cycle of Prayer” and national and our Diocesan campaigns. We are also encouraging Facebook groups that allow us to target our messaging further and enable peer to peer learning and the sharing of good practice and resources.

Twitter

Likened to a wave, or quick chat in the corridor, Twitter produces much lower engagement and has a very specific audience and user. The most-shared tweets are usually those that are controversial, something that we would not necessarily want to promote. We do however have some prolific Tweeters in our Diocese – 219 in all – and we encourage them to share content on our behalf. But this is a small percentage of our audience and, while re-tweeting can increase the reach, our average is around 410 impressions with just 5.3 mentions.

Instagram

In a nutshell, this is an image-sharing app which allows users to assign filters and captions to photos and short movies and share them with followers. Popular with a younger audience, we should not underestimate the power of a shared image to inspire, to promote a vision or priority and to educate. This is an area we need to expand on.

YouTube

Over the pandemic our YouTube presence has certainly expanded as we have provided (*and been provided with*) with so much more suitable material. With the amount of content we are generating we can now look to offer our own channel. YouTube provides us with a platform to upload videos and gives us a presence, but may soon have a rival in Facebook Video. We welcome requests for video content and are happy to receive news in a video format.

#OntheVine - Podcasts and Video Content

Grapevine is linked with our popular 'On the Vine' link that carries our podcasts, videos and longer interviews. This allows even greater scope for engagement beyond broadcast and for the delivery of key messages and Diocesan priorities to a wider audience. Through this platform, we can both entertain and educate. It allows us, through conversations, to explore issues of faith, our Diocesan Vision and creative content. We welcome longer articles, videos and podcasts from you for this.

Campaigns

Social Media is an ideal platform for encouraging engagement with our campaigns, especially those around Social Justice. Our yearly, and very popular, Advent Calendar of Stories and our Sudan emergency Appeal are just two examples of where this has proven a huge success. We also use the platforms to encourage participation in national church initiatives such as Live Lent and Comfort and Joy, and ecumenical and NGO campaigns such as Thy Kingdom Come or the 16 days of Activism. In 2021 Generosity and Giving will also see us once again combine a national initiative with a more localised Diocesan campaign. We always welcome suggestions for where we can support parishes with their own initiatives or campaigns.

Other Comms Activities presently undertaken by the Comms Team:

- Rural Hope COMMS
- Bishops Press Office
- COMMS Advice to Boards and Committees
- Preparation for Synod and Deanery Visits.
- Promoting the Diocesan "brands"
- Safeguarding
- Creation of podcasts and video material.

Your Social Media

The use of social media as a key tool for communication will continue to be a priority for Communications. Through social media, we can reach a wide audience both internal and external.

Your Social Media Strategy - A Quick 'How to' Guide:

- **Start with a Facebook Page**
Creating strong connections between Facebook groups will continue to be important, especially as we move to more social media campaigns. Facebook can be your shop window to your wider community. Encourage the posting of pictures and stories, lots of content. Advertise Events and tell people about them while and after they have happened.
- **The use of Facebook "groups" to engage** with specific topics and audiences. These encourage the sharing of creative content, such as collective worship, sermons, fresh expressions, social action, which are ways to engage with specific groups, promote good practice and encourage growth. *As Bishop John reminded us "People do want to share, talk, to think and learn."*
- **Create and encourage campaigns via social media.** We are people- and story-based and so is Facebook, and this this allows use to exploit the medium with campaigns that connect us, energize us, inform us and inspire us.
- **Develop Instagram** as a medium for real engagement especially with our younger audience. Also look to explore other younger social media platforms. These naturally tap into a younger audience and allow us to connect further with our Children's and Young People's mission. Instagram needs to replace Twitter as our second social media engagement tool.
- **YouTube.** Encourage content provision from our senior staff and parishes to populate a dedicated channel
- **Develop our other social media platforms.** Time must be devoted to developing shareable content and learning about networking on these platforms.
- **Beware not all publicity is positive.** Social media will open you up to public criticism and once comments are out there it can be very hard to redress their impact without fuelling the fire. Always keep your comments neutral and try to make sure one voice speaks in redress to an issue, multiple voices can only inflame a situation or can feel like bullying of an individual. If in doubt give us a call for advice.

Crisis and media management and media advice

Dealing with the media or a community protest group might be part of your role, but it can feel overwhelming if you've not had to do this before. The Diocesan Communications Team is always on hand and happy to provide help and advice if you're not sure what to do.

Enquiries will range from arguments about graveyards to deaths and issues around safeguarding. But there will also be good news stories and even the faintly ridiculous. Our favourite request was for a vicar to go on air to talk about what you should wear in the heat to church, but even that request led to a great interview.

Our Top Tips

- **There is no such thing as off the record.** Anything you say could be reported, so always be polite and courteous. It's OK to say that you will get back to the journalist. Ask them what their deadline is and be sure to respond before deadline if the question is something you can answer easily.
- **Journalists can be persistent.** Their job is to get the full story and answer the questions someone reading their story would ask, like "what does the Vicar think?" But the public will understand you are busy, so do let a journalist know that, while you would talk to them, if it is an inconvenient time, you are busy dealing with parish matters – and feel free to let them know what they are, if you can.
- **The Comms Team is here for you.** If the issue is controversial, or if you're not sure how to respond, then it's always best to ring for advice and support. For a host of legal reasons, safeguarding matters and stories involving the police should always be referred to the communications team before you commit to speaking with a journalist. If it helps, when these issues arise, simply leave a request for the media to contact us as part of your message, which will free you up to do the pastoral work that will be doubt be needed in your parishes.
- **Stick to the facts.** While it's important to be friendly, it's also important to be factual and to the point. Whether you're being interviewed or helping the journalist with information to support their story, never speculate!
- **Never say 'no comment'.** Either refer the journalist to us or, if it's an interview, say confidently "that's not something I can answer... but what I can say is this..."
- **If in doubt...** give us a ring - that's what we are here for!

Finally.... (and thank you for reading this far)

Who to contact

In emergencies we are available between 7am and 10pm each day of the week on [07799 900610](tel:07799900610).

For all other enquiries and interview practice please email us at

comms@salisbury.anglican.org.

The Reverend Carole Peters-King

Director of Communications, Diocese of Salisbury.

Email: carole.peters-king@salisbury.anglican.org

Mob: 07799 900610 or 07710 128859

I'm normally available to answer media enquiries Monday to Thursday during office hours.

For general media enquiries on a Friday during normal office hours, do contact Michael Ford (see below).

However, if you have an urgent enquiry or issue on a Friday, over the weekend or out of normal office hours, then please do try my mobile (07710 28859), leave a message and feel free to text if you need a more immediate response.

Michael Ford

Digital Missioner, Diocese of Salisbury

Email: michael.ford@salisbury.anglican.org

Mob: 07500 836989

Some useful clicks:

<https://www.salisbury.anglican.org/whos-who/news-and-events>

Your one-stop page for parish and school news and events.

Submit your event here.

<https://www.salisbury.anglican.org/whos-who/contacts/communications>

The landing page for Communications. Click on an icon to go to

- Publications
- When the media calls
- How to tell your story
- For Parish editors

Useful Background



External Media & Trends

In our Diocese, only 6% of over 16s in the general population have never used the internet. However, if we look at the age profile of many of our congregations, this changes – only 47% of over 75s had used the internet recently and 29% of over 65 year olds have never used the internet. That said, the figures show the generation gap is closing year on year. * (ONS: *Internet Users 2019*).

The latest Ofcom briefing on news consumption shows that nearly half of all adults are now actively consuming more of their news via social media. When social media users were asked how they find out about news, 41% said from social media posts. 2 in 3 internet users are members of Facebook, 3 in 10 use Instagram and, while 1 in 3 uses Twitter, it is important to note that the socio-economic profile of these users does not reflect the national population.

While 58% of over 65s still buy newspapers, the circulation of national and local papers such as the Dorset Echo and Western Gazette is in rapid decline. All our local newspapers have online versions – 64% of over 65s and 35% of 16-24s say they read their local news online.

The trend for gaining information from the web is increasing – 83% of 16-24s say they get all their information from the internet.

This new adoption of how news is consumed has changed how as communicators we need to respond.

News is now 24-hour, and so response times for requests for quotes or information pertaining to potential stories has a new immediacy. As social media provides fertile lands for newsgathering, much of our content is now shared with the local media in this way. 'Media releases' are now saved for high-impact stories.

Outside of the wider media, with printing costs increasing and volunteers decreasing, there has been a corresponding decline in Parish Magazines from 96 to 62. Those who remain often share content with community magazines and so space for church items has also decreased.

The good news is that roughly 60% of 12-15s are interested in the news.



Our Diocesan Priorities Telling Our Story- Past Present and into the Future

How we got here. In 2011, Bishop Nicholas engaged the Diocese in a careful and prayerful process of exploration and discernment.

Through the '[Let us Talk](#)' process and Deanery Visits, he invited us all to explore who we are as a Diocese, where we are going and how God wants us to move forward. This led to our Diocesan vision, [Renewing Hope: Pray, Serve, Grow](#).

As a Diocese we have been given a task and a challenge. The task was to get people telling their stories of hope and the challenge was to continue to answer within our parishes, 3 questions:
What do you pray for? Whom do you serve? How will you grow?

The ambition through Renewing Hope Pray Serve Grow was to ensure a thriving Christian presence in every community with a continued commitment to the parish system, grow church membership and increase vocations to ordained ministry.

In 2019 Bishop Nicholas invited Bishop John Gladwin to review the vision and programme and in his report, Bishop John identified priorities for our onward journey towards these goals. Throughout the rest of the year, an ongoing conversation was started with our deaneries and parishes, our DBE and DBF support staff, and our senior leadership team on how this list could be discerned into 3 key priorities.

Where we are now. Three key priorities have emerged and they will form part of our refreshing of Renewing Hope -Pray Serve Grow from 2020 onwards. These are 3 priorities of DISCIPLESHIP & EVANGELISM, DYNAMIC COLLABORATION & LEADERSHIP, and TRANSFORMING LIVES & COMMUNITIES.

We commit that, as a whole Diocese, we will:

- Re-imagine patterns of ministry and how we measure growth
- Work collaboratively and locally
- Travel light and learn from experience to release resource and energy for mission
- Make our churches a safe and welcoming place for all

As Churches and Schools we will:

- Work in partnerships, relevant to the local context, and rooted in Jesus Christ
- Embrace the passions of children and young people, enabling them to grow in faith and leadership

And as Diocesan-wide support teams we will:

- Serve our local Churches and Schools,
- Establish sustainable finances for our ministry and mission
- Invest in change and establish new ways of working

These priorities, and our commitments made from them, aligned with our continuing vision of Renewing Hope- Pray Serve Grow, provide the road map for our future ministry and mission from 2020 onwards. There is now an imperative to communicate these priorities and commitments and to show the ongoing outcomes of a life led through them.