



Media Communications Policy

All Saints' Church, Walsoken

Please refer to Document S&S_Doc_001 for all Safeguarding and Social requirements.

Specific Policy

This Safeguarding & Social (S&S) sub-policy controls media communication (press & TV) at church.

The purpose of this policy is to define the roles and responsibilities of the PCC when communicating with the media. It is not the intention of this policy to curb freedom of speech, rather, it provides guidance on how to deal with issues that may arise when dealing with the media.

Note: In times when our local church is embroiled in any kind of unfortunate incident all PCC members should refer all press & TV enquiries to the Ely Diocese Communications Team.

Email: communications@elydiocese.org

Reference Documents

None

Procedure

There are two main types of interaction with the Press or TV.

- 1) **Welcomed interaction.** This is to publicise an event or a potential 'good news' church story.
- 2) **Unwelcomed interaction.** When an unfortunate incident has occurred and the press & TV story will be a 'bad news' church story

Welcomed Interactions (Press releases)

The purpose of a press release is to make the media aware of a potential 'good news' story, to provide important public information or to explain the church's position on a particular local issue. All press releases must not contain contentious issues, bring All Saints', Walsoken into disrepute or open All Saints' Church, Walsoken to any legal proceedings. If there is any doubt consult with the Ely Diocese communications team.

Any member of the PCC may draft a press release; however, they must be agreement ahead of time by the PCC. Press releases should be issued by the PCC chair. See appendix 1 for guidelines for writing a press release.

Unwelcomed Interaction

In this very unlikely situation, which is best described as "A reporter has turned up with a microphone!" You'll be caught off guard. Here are some guidelines.

- 1) Proceed with caution. If you are in any doubt about any part of the question leave it out of the answer. Do not give personal opinions.
- 2) Never talk "off the record". It's unlikely to work.
- 3) "Can I quote you on that?". No. First tell the reporter "I want to make sure I'm not quoted directly by name".
- 4) Tell the truth. Reporters should verify facts before publishing. If you don't know the answer to any question, say you don't know. Don't try to guess.
- 5) Never say "No comment". These days it is taken to mean "we're in the wrong". Rather say "Leave your details and we'll get back to you with a response".
- 6) Don't comment on everything. Don't provide answers to questions that were not asked.
- 7) If an inaccurate statement is made by a reporter or yourself, correct it immediately.

No matter how persistent the reporter is, no matter how many times they may frantically ask you the same question, do not comment if you believe you should not. Stay calm and in control

If you are contacted by email or telephone refer them to the Ely Diocese Communications Team. If time permits, contact the Ely Diocese Communications Team shortly after to apprise them of the press or TV contact.

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Forms

None

Diagrams

None

Appendices

Appendix 1. Guidelines for Press Releases

Know Your Audience

Understanding who your readers are is crucial. Are you addressing professionals, potential congregation or a broader audience? Consider what aspects of your news will resonate most with this target audience and how they prefer to consume information, then tailor your message and language to appeal directly to them.

Be Concise

All readers appreciate brevity, and there are few press release rules more important than being concise. Stick to essential details that support your key information and avoid unnecessary jargon your audience might not understand. Aim for a press release word count of 300 to 500 words to keep your message clear and focused.

Stay Relevant

It's crucial to keep in mind the key to successful press release writing: Tell the readers why they should care about your story in the headline to get them to read the body of your release. To keep them engaged, continue telling them why it matters. Make your press release compelling by connecting it to current trends, local developments or broader social issues that matter to your target audience. A timely, relevant press release is more likely to be picked up by media outlets and spark interest among readers.

Tell a Story

Another way to appeal to your audience is to humanise your story. Write your press release like a mini story with a clear beginning, middle and end that weaves a compelling narrative and invites curiosity. Include quotes from someone directly affected by the story you're covering to make it more personal.

Incorporate SEO

SEO has best practices such as incorporating relevant keywords, optimising headlines and descriptions and utilising backlinks can help your press release achieve higher visibility on search engine results pages and reach a broader audience online.

Provide Credibility

One of the best press release writing tips recommended is to add authority by backing up your claims with data. Support your message with statistics, research or recent reports, either your own or from another reputable source. Using data can build trust with your audience and increase your chances of getting picked up.

Include a Call to Action

Like any marketing or public relations communication, press releases should direct readers to take the next step. Your call to action should align with your press release's goal: You could direct readers to your website, provide contact information or invite them to register for a product launch or event.

Review and Refine

It's not only important to understand how to write a press release – it's imperative to edit it thoroughly for grammar, style and flow. First proofread your press release to catch typos, grammar errors and awkward phrasing. Then re-read it to make sure each word serves a purpose and that your key message is being conveyed. When you're sure that every word adds value, you're ready to promote your press release.

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