Social Media Guidelines

These guidelines are applicable to anyone who considers him/herself part of Longcroft Christian Fellowship and covers the use of:

- Social networking websites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Friends Reunited, Bebo, and MySpace.
- Microblogging broadcasting, of which the best-known facility is Twitter.
- Regular online blogs (web logs, or online diaries).
- Video-sharing websites such as YouTube and Vimeo.
- Communications in virtual worlds such as Second Life.

As a church we value the communication opportunities that social media, blogs and video sharing sites present. New technology offers many opportunities for us to share news, updates and prayer requests. Our guidelines affirm the use of social media, but also seek to protect the reputation of the church and those we represent.

Anyone who wants to create a church related website, online blog, or upload video content to YouTube or other social site, which links with the church or which uses the church logo or identifies him/herself as a member should notify the elders.

Social media is viewed as any other means of representing the church and therefore care must be taken not to make false representation. This includes comments you make on personal websites or social media sites.

General Guidelines

The following pointers should be interpreted as general guidelines for the use of such media by members. They are not exhaustive, and should be viewed as a positive affirmation of the use of social media in a way that enables members to become social media ambassadors. A number of possible scenarios are discussed as examples.

a) You are personally responsible for any content you personally publish online, whether in a blog, social networking site or any other form of user-generated media. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time. Bear in mind that once published you may never be able to completely remove any published item, due to copying etc. Protect your privacy and take care to understand a site's terms of service. In particular please note that social network sites normally have a lower age limit (e.g. 13 on Facebook).

b) Be thoughtful about how you present yourself in online social networks. The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in online social networks. By virtue of identifying yourself as a member of Longcroft within a social network, you are now connected to your colleagues, friends and even contacts. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your participation in the life of the church, but more than that it should be consistent with a Christ-like testimony.

c) Leaders should take special responsibility when participating in online environments. By virtue of their position, they must consider whether personal

thoughts they publish may be misunderstood as expressing that of the church. Any leader should assume that it would not just be his/her own team or associates that would read what is written online and hence, for example, these are not the places to communicate policies. Communications of a sensitive or secure nature should be made via e-mail or letter.

d) Adopt a warm, positive, open and approachable tone. Remember that our image is developed by the public's interaction with real church members. That image should be a positive one. Your tone, your openness, your approachability and value of your content can help with that.

e) Respect your audience. Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the church. You should also show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory.

f) Some topics relating to the church are sensitive and should never be discussed online, even if you are expressing your own opinion and using a disclaimer.

g) Take particular care when posting information about children's activities or interacting with children online. Permission should always be sought before posting photographs of children online, or in any published media, and never include names with photographs, even when access to a blog or Facebook page is restricted. Whilst you may control access to your Facebook page, there is nothing preventing a friend or associate passing on a photograph or a contact. In general, refrain from having online conversations with minors. If you are in any doubt whether your online behaviour affects children please contact the church's Child Protection team. It is advisable not to have minor's as 'contacts' in your 'friends', it may be difficult to explain why there are one of your contacts if any accusation is made.

h) It is advisable that any email contact with parents and or children should be made from a church-only email address; one may be setup for each club etc. where leaders have permission to view and send, rather than using our own personal email addresses.

i) If any personal phone numbers are given out as contacts for clubs etc., these should only be given on, for example, church headed paper where church phone numbers are also given. Similarly mobile numbers for emergency contact on trips or residential visits should be treated the same and any numbers relating to the activity be deleted afterwards.

j) Online postings relating to Longcroft should not identify individuals. This is not only to protect our witness and reputation, but also to prevent cyber stalking. For this purpose cyber stalking is defined as the use of the Internet or other electronic means to stalk or harass an individual, a group of individuals, or an organisation. It may include false accusations, monitoring, making threats, identity theft, damage to data or equipment, the solicitation of minors for sex, or gathering information in order to harass.

k) Confidentiality is arguably a major issue with Microblogging (e.g. tweets) because users may broadcast sensitive personal information to anyone who views their public feed. Therefore always regard tweets as in the public domain and act appropriately.

l) Respect copyrights and fair use. Always give people proper credit for their work, and make sure you have the right to use something with attribution before you publish. Similarly, don't use the church's logos or intellectual copyright unless approved to do so.