

# Parish Websites

A good website is essential in order to communicate with the outside world. Think of it as a window on parish life. It needs to be visually appealing, easy to navigate and informative.

## Consider your audience

There will be two main groups: existing members needing information and potential visitors/future members. Make a list of (a) who is likely to visit you, (b) what they might be looking for, and (c) what you can offer them.

- People new to the area may be looking for a church to go to, and might be interested to know your denomination and style of worship, as well as getting an idea of church life. They may also want contact details for their local clergy
- Couples looking to get married may be seeking an attractive nearby church which gives them immediate online help with costs and tips, including music
- Parishioners may be looking for service times, for the latest news or for photos, especially if they know they are going to be online. Increasingly, they will expect audio visual material from services, including sermons.

## Where to start

Find a volunteer, someone who is at home on the Internet, to manage the site for you. The technical knowledge required is modest, and affordable web design and set-up services are available. It is important to select a passionate communicator: your web manager's enthusiasm will make all the difference.

[www.AChurchNearYou.com](http://www.AChurchNearYou.com) is the national network for all Church of England parishes. Your web editor should log in and use the tutorial to update your parish details. It may also give you ideas for your own website!

[Click here](#) to view our parish websites, including those featured at the top of the page. If you like the look of a particular website, contact the parish and ask them how they got started.

The likes of [www.ChurchEdit.co.uk](http://www.ChurchEdit.co.uk) and [www.Church123.com](http://www.Church123.com) advise parishes across the country and provide a comprehensive service, including hosting. Our [Toolkit folder](#) has a ChurchEdit checklist for parish websites.

## Top tips

- Choose a short, memorable name easy to reproduce on letters, publicity and noticeboards
- Register with Google. Browse for 'register my website with Google'
- Also consider Facebook (which gets more traffic than Google) and Twitter. Our [Toolkit folder](#) has an introduction to social media, as well as our diocesan staff policy
- Keep the front page simple and uncluttered, with minimal text
- Ensure you use a 'Search' box
- Quality photography is essential. Either use your own, or free pics from the likes of [Pexels](#), [Pixabay](#) or [Unsplash](#). **NB:** if you use copyrighted images, you may get fined!
- Environmental tip: publish your notices and pew sheets online and save paper
- Think about who will run the site week-to-week and keep it 'alive'. It's no good if, for instance, only one person knows how to update the site and then moves away
- Keep your website simple to navigate, easy to maintain, and above all **up to date!**

### Your Comms Team are:

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