

Staff and Volunteer

Code of conduct (July 2026)

Contents

1. Our basic code of conduct for our staff and volunteers	page 2
2. Social media policy for volunteers and staff	page 4
3. The relation between church staff/volunteers and The Dove Café	page 7
4. Additional code of conduct for PCC and DCC members	page 9

Note for paid employees and clergy/licensed ministers

Employees for the PCC: There are policies and procedures in place for employees of the PCC (that is, the trustees of the Beaconsfield Church of England churches) in line with employment law and good practice. All staff will be given copies of/access to these upon commencing employment. If any part of this code of conduct and/or its policies are regarded to be contrary to employment law and/or the PCCs policies and procedures for employees, and/or the Church of England's Parish Safeguarding Handbook, then those documents take precedence over this code of conduct.

Clergy and licensed ministers: There are policies, procedures and expected behaviour/conduct codes for clergy and lay ministers licensed by the Bishop of Oxford and/or the Bishop of Buckingham. If any part of this code of conduct and/or its policies are regarded to be contrary to employment law, and/or the PCCs policies and procedures, and/or the Diocese of Oxford's policies and procedures, and/or the Church of England's Parish Safeguarding Handbook, and/or the Church of England's Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of Clergy, then those documents take precedence over this code of conduct.

I. Our basic code of conduct for our staff and volunteers

Explanation

This code of conduct aims to make sure everyone who works or volunteers at St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited knows what is expected of them and feels safe, respected and valued.

St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited must make sure that everyone working or volunteering for us has seen, understood and agreed to follow the code of conduct, and that they understand the consequences of inappropriate conduct.

We expect people who work for or volunteer at St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited both inside the church building, café or out in the garden, those operating under our name and those representing us in any way including upon social media to display appropriate conduct at all times. This includes conduct that takes place away from our spaces and online.

Purpose

This code of conduct is part of our process for making sure everyone who comes into contact with St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited receives the support they need.

This code of conduct aims to:

- identify acceptable and unacceptable behaviour,
- encourage cooperation, honesty, fairness and respect,
- create an environment where your self-esteem, self-respect and self-confidence will grow,
- encourage you to recognise and respect the rights of others,
- encourage you to take responsibility for your own behaviour,
- help resolve conflicts and make it clear what will happen if you decide not to follow the code.

Who is covered by this code of conduct

This code of conduct covers volunteers of St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited, PCC/DCC employees working at or for St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited, volunteers and/or staff of other organisations who run formal sessions in our buildings, trustees and/or directors.

Expected behaviour: the "dos" and "don'ts" at St Thomas's Church and The Dove Café

You should:

- adhere to your volunteer agreement and role description,
- report any concerns about the safety of children or vulnerable adults immediately to your line manager, supervisor, the vicar, or deal with them using the contacts/advice on the "Promoting a Safer Church" posters in the building,

- always work in line with your training and induction, especially with regards to safety and food preparation,
- always try to cooperate with other team members,
- be careful in the use of language and mindful of the sensitivity of others to words we might find acceptable with our friends or at home
- be friendly,
- listen to others,
- be helpful,
- have good manners,
- treat everyone with respect and equality,
- take responsibility for your own behaviour,
- talk to your line manager, supervisor or the vicar if anything concerns you,
- follow this code of behaviour and other rules (including the law),
- try to have fun, and play your part in making this a fun environment,
- have a general understanding of the values and ethos as St Thomas's Church and/or the Dove Café Limited and their Christian foundations; respecting this setting as primarily a place of Christian worship. Be mindful as to whether certain conversations or actions are appropriate in such a setting. If in doubt, you should ask your line manager, supervisor or the vicar.

You should not:

- be disrespectful to anyone else,
- swear or use offensive language,
- bully other people, in-person or online,
- talk unkindly about anyone behind their back to visitors or other volunteers; instead, if you have a concern about anyone you should speak to your line manager, supervisor, the vicar or if it is regarding the safety of a child or vulnerable adult, the contacts on the "Promoting A Safer Church" poster,
- share prejudicial views of any kind that would be contrary to the law (including, but not limited to: racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, transphobia, disablism) either in-person or online (including your own social media profiles),
- behave in a way that could be intimidating,
- be abusive towards anyone.

What happens when someone doesn't follow this code of conduct

There are grievance and disciplinary policies and processes in place for employees of the PCC (that is, the trustees of the Beaconsfield Church of England churches) in line with employment law and good practice. Any concerns regarding the conduct of paid employees will be dealt with using these policies and processes.

For volunteers, the following process will be followed, overseen by the vicar and churchwardens (remember, signed volunteer agreements are not contracts and can be terminated by you, the volunteer, or us, St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café, at any time and without notice.)

A minor, first-time incident: If you behave in a way that doesn't follow our code of conduct, we will remind you about it and ask you to comply with it. We will give you an opportunity to change your behaviour. This gives you the chance to think and to plan how you could behave differently.

Formal warning: If you continue not to follow the code of conduct after your first warning/reminder, or if your behaviour is considered more serious, you will be given a formal warning by the café manager and/or the vicar, or those representing them during vacancies or times of leave. They will make a record about what happened which will be filed safely.

Final warning: If the support we have put in place isn't helping you to change your behaviour, we may need to give you a final warning. Again, this will be recorded. If this is not heeded to a satisfactory level you will be asked to leave.

You can appeal a decision; appeals will be considered by the District Church Council (DCC) of St Thomas Holtspur. Appeals need to be received in writing by the chair (vicar) and secretary within 14 days of a final written decision. The DCC will meet to consider appeals as soon as possible.

2. Social media policy for volunteers and staff

Additional material kindly provided by © Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire.

Explanation

St Thomas's Church and The Dove Café Limited uses social media in its work and recognises that those who are involved in its work may also use social media either as part of their role or in their private lives. A written policy is therefore required for all staff, volunteers and stakeholders on the acceptable use of social networking at work and as representatives of the church, charity and/or business.

St Thomas's Church and The Dove Café Limited encourages the responsible use of social media. The purpose of this policy is to set out what St Thomas's Church and The Dove Café Limited expects from our volunteers when using social media. It is important to remember that we are all ambassadors for the charity and that social media is never private.

Purpose

This policy is solely for volunteers and aims to:

- give clear guidelines on what volunteers can say about the organisation;
- comply with relevant legislation and protect staff and volunteers;
- help volunteer supervisors manage performance effectively;

- help volunteers draw a line between their private lives and their volunteering;
- protect St Thomas's Church and The Dove Café Limited against liability for the actions of volunteers;
- be clear about sensitive issues such as monitoring and explain how problems with inappropriate use will be addressed.

Policy Statement

St Thomas's Church and The Dove Café Limited recognises that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics relevant to our work using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, X, Instagram, blogs and wikis etc. This policy aims to protect individuals volunteering with us in any role and to encourage you to take responsibility for what you write, exercise good judgment and common sense.

Inappropriate use of social media can pose risks to our confidential and proprietary information and reputation, and can jeopardise our compliance with legal obligations. To minimise these risks, to avoid loss of work time and to ensure that our IT resources and communications systems are used only for appropriate business purposes, we expect volunteers to adhere to this policy.

Only persons nominated to do so may post on DCC and The Dove Café Limited social media pages and accounts. Formal permission can be given by: the vicar, or the corporate bodies of the church (DCC) or The Dove Café Limited (the board.)

Who is covered by this policy

This policy covers volunteers of St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited, PCC/DCC employees working at or for St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited, volunteers and/or staff of other organisations who run formal sessions in our buildings, trustees and/or directors.

The scope and purpose of this policy

This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, YouTube, X, Instagram and all other social networking sites, and all other internet postings, including blogs.

It applies to the use of social media for church/charity/café purposes, whether while working, volunteering or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using our IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to staff/volunteers.

If a staff member/volunteer is found to be in breach of this policy their volunteer supervisor will address this using the PCC/DCCs agreed disciplinary procedure for staff, or within the terms stated in your volunteer agreement, or for external organisations' volunteers/staff, the terms of the user or hire agreement.

This policy links to all other policies therefore social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of our other policies such as equal opportunities, data protection etc.

Personnel responsible for implementing the Policy

All staff and volunteer supervisors have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that all volunteers understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and taking action when behaviour falls below this.

All staff and volunteers are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media or questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be reported to the Vicar, the Churchwardens, or in writing to the PCC and/or DCC via its secretary.

Any content which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported to The Parish Safeguarding Officer or the Vicar in line with the reporting procedures outlined in the PCC's Safeguarding Policy.

Guidelines for responsible use of social media

The following sections of the policy provide staff and volunteers with common-sense guidelines and recommendations for using social media responsibly and safely.

We want you to help protect our charity and business reputations. Volunteers must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about: St Thomas's Church/The Dove Café Limited/The Diocese of Oxford/The Church of England; our staff, our clients, volunteers or members past or present; suppliers and vendors; and external organisations who use our space(s), other affiliates and stakeholders.

Staff and volunteers should also avoid social communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage our business reputation, even indirectly.

Staff and volunteers are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media (as part of their role or on personal sites). Remember that what you publish might be available to be read by the masses including St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited colleagues, volunteers, future employers and social acquaintances for a long time. Keep this in mind before you post content.

A publicity consent form must be obtained prior to posting photos of people in the church or café which may be used on social media.

St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited does not permit tagging of vulnerable adults or anyone under the age of 18.

There is no obligation for staff or volunteers to link their personal social media to any St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited social media.

Staff or volunteers are not permitted to set up social media accounts for work purposes without prior consultation with their line manager or the vicar.

If you disclose your affiliation as an employee or volunteer of St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited, you must also state that your views do not represent those of the organisation you are working or volunteering with. For example, you could state, "the views in this posting do not represent the views of St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited." You should also ensure that your profile and any content you post are consistent with the image you present to those you work with as part of your volunteering role.

You can only use a St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited email address if your work or volunteering role involves using social media on behalf of the organisation.

You are responsible for the security settings of any social media sites you use and should ensure they are set to the appropriate level if you wish to limit who can see your information.

Remember that you must respect confidentiality at all times and protect confidential information. You should be mindful of Data Protection issues, if in doubt speak to your supervisor or the vicar. Confidential information includes things such as unpublished details about our work, details of current projects, future projects, financial information or information held on our supporters, staff or volunteers.

Avoid posting comments about sensitive St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited related topics, such as our performance. Even if you make it clear that your views do not represent those of our charity, your comments could still damage our reputation.

If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from making the communication until you discuss it with your supervisor or the vicar.

If you see content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited or our stakeholders, you should report it to your supervisor and/or the vicar. All staff and volunteers are responsible for protecting our reputation.

Contact details of staff and volunteers are subject to data protection. Staff and volunteers are not permitted to access or store information on other staff or volunteers that would breach data protection.

Personal use of social media in the office environment

We recognise that volunteers may occasionally desire to use social media for personal activities in the church, café and office. We authorise such occasional use during rest breaks so long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content and does not interfere with your working or volunteering role. You should not use St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited IT resources and communications systems for any matter that you wish to be kept private or confidential. If using the churches social media then circulating chain letters or other spam is never permitted. Circulating or posting commercial, personal, philosophical, religious or political solicitations, or promotion of outside organisations unrelated to The Church of England (including its belief and doctrine), The Diocese of Oxford, the Parish of Beaconsfield, St Thomas's Church and The Dove Café Limited's work is also prohibited unless prior permission has been sought and granted by the vicar.

3. The relation between church staff/volunteers and The Dove Café

Explanation

St Thomas's Church and The Dove Café Limited share a space. This policy guidance is to help ensure that as far as possible usage is fair and agreed, and who has authority to make decisions to ensure that the environment is safe and the mission is in line with the stated objectives of the PCC/DCC and/or The Dove Café Limited.

Who is covered by this policy

This policy covers volunteers of St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited, PCC/DCC employees working at or for St Thomas's Church and/or The Dove Café Limited, volunteers and/or staff of other organisations who run formal sessions in our buildings, trustees and/or directors.

Guidelines on professional relationships between St Thomas's Church staff and volunteers, and the staff and volunteers of The Dove Café Limited

It is solely the role of the vicar to direct and oversee the work of the café manager, and/or supervisor(s). Church staff, volunteers and members may not direct the café manager and/or supervisor(s) with regards to what they believe they ought to be doing, the vision, or values of the café. This is the role of the person(s) line manager, in conjunction with the Cafés committee and board.

Any requests by church staff, volunteers and members for the use of the café and/or the help of café staff needs to be submitted to the vicar. The café manager and/or supervisor(s) may choose to assist with church staff, volunteers and members requests but are under no obligation to do so without direction from the vicar.

During the cafés opening (and/or staff working hours) the café manager and/or supervisor(s) decisions are to be respected as final. Any concerns about decisions can be directed towards the vicar for consideration and/or investigation. The vicar will then work with parties to ensure an agreeable future working practice can be agreed.

Safeguarding concerns should always be reported through the normal channels, and if anyone is in danger you should immediately call 999.

Church staff, volunteers and members with concerns, suggestions and questions regarding the café and/or its staff should direct them to the vicar in the first instance, and secondarily in writing to the board of The Dove Café Limited via the secretary if required.

Guidelines for use of the shared space in St Thomas's Church during the opening times of The Dove Café Limited

It is the job of the café manager and/or supervisor(s) to ensure that the café is a safe and hospitable place during opening hours, making use of the church's nave space and enclosed garden. During the cafés opening hours, the café manager and/or café supervisor(s) have the final say on what activities can and cannot take place in the nave space and the enclosed garden.

Church staff/volunteers/members, and staff/volunteers from external organisations using our space must always ask the café manager and/or supervisor(s) whether or not an activity other than that which is to be expected in a café is safe to take place. This includes any maintenance activity. The café manager and/or café supervisor(s) can refuse or halt any activity or maintenance work from taking place during the cafés opening hours if they think that is necessary for safety reasons, and/or because it is not appropriate for a café space, and/or it impacts the ministry or hospitality of the church/café, and/or it is not appropriate in the building because its primary use is for Christian worship and an activity or behaviour is not in line with the doctrine or mission of The Church of England.

4. Additional code of conduct for PCC and DCC members, and The Dove Café Limited board and committee members

Additional material kindly provided by © The Diocese of Ely and © John Truscott.

Explanation

A 'Code of Conduct' is a statement of how people, often those in positions of responsibility, should behave. PCC/DCC members hold significant responsibility as Charity Trustees, as employers and as stewards of funds and physical assets entrusted to the church. To maintain the confidence of church members they need to act with integrity. A Code of Conduct sets the standard that PCC/DCC members agree and seek to live by.

Much of the detail of what follows applies to PCC/DCC business and the conduct of meetings, but principles of integrity demand that attitudes and actions both in and outside meetings are consistent, so the Code provided below covers all life.

It is normal practice for all Council members to sign a copy of any such code at the start of each PCC/DCC year. It would in fact be wise for those standing for election to the PCC/DCC at the church's annual meeting to be made aware of the Code of Conduct before their nomination goes forward, explaining that they will be expected to sign this and abide by it.

Such a code for a church should complement other guidance about the PCC/DCC. Examples here would include an explanation of the Council's role and make-up within ecclesiastical law (see <https://www.parishresources.org.uk/pccs/governing-documents/>), the role of Charity Trustees (see <https://www.parishresources.org.uk/pccs/trusteeship/> and the pdf accessed there) and induction training for new Council members regarding, in particular, current business. See also Training Notes TN88, (<https://www.john-truscott.co.uk/Resources/Training-Notes-index/Advice-to-a-new-committee-member>) advice to a new committee member, in the Resources section of the author's website.

PCC/DCC members are assumed to be disciples of Jesus Christ, members of the church family, Trustees of the charity, and therefore holders of the church vision. This basis for a PCC/DCC Code of Conduct includes a number of principles followed by some specific examples of how these principles should be worked out in practice. An effective Code of Conduct should include both of these.

'Nolan principles', or, 'The Principles of Public Life'

These are generally accepted principles for the governance of public life. They have been around for over 25 years and are still as relevant as they always were. They are widely used in the NHS, local government, corporate bodies and charities. There is some measure of overlap between them. In what follows these are listed but then applied not only to PCC/DCC members being Charity Trustees but also, therefore, Christian leaders.

Selflessness: We are to seek the best interests of the whole church in pursuing its overall vision, rather than prioritising our own special interests or those of any one group. We are to pray for God's blessing on our business and for other PCC/DCC members including those we may disagree with. We are to seek the best for others on the Council.

Integrity: We are to promote the Christian values of the church and not be influenced by any form of personal benefit. We are to live consistent lives both in and outside meetings as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Objectivity: We are to seek to be impartial and fair, using the best evidence available for decisions we make, seeking to follow biblical principles, and avoiding any form of discrimination or bias.

Accountability: We are to be accountable to the church membership for our decisions and actions, and ultimately to the Lord Jesus Christ as his servants. We are to seek to enable God's will to be discovered and actioned. We are to hold a duty of care for any church staff we employ.

Openness: We are to seek to be transparent and accountable in our actions and declare any personal conflicts of interest. We are to work together with fellow-Trustees in a team-like way rather than pursuing personal preferences. We are to seek to become a coherent team more than a group of individuals.

Honesty: We are to be open and truthful in our lives as Christians and in our discussions as Trustees. We are to give an honest, unbiased view of meetings to others but to be totally reliable on any issue of confidentiality.

Leadership: We are to model effective leadership within the church, to seek God's will, and so earn respect for our godly living. We are to support the church's services and events and hold attendance at PCC/DCC meetings as a high priority.

Respect: We are to be courteous and respectful of our fellow-Trustees, as sisters and brothers together in the Christian family. We are to hold each other in high regard, to listen attentively to and understand the views of others even if we disagree with them, seeking to encourage and support each other.

Biblical principles

That has taken a standard set of principles and applied them in a Christian context. But we can also go to Scripture to see what principles we can find there.

One source of biblical wisdom would be the requirements for elders and deacons in the Pastoral Epistles. The two lists in 1 Timothy are remarkably similar but if we take the deacons one as being, possibly, closer to the idea of a PCC member we note (showing the equivalent Nolan principles in the brackets) in 1 Timothy 3:8-13:

Worthy of respect (Respect): As the Nolan list but here more about being respected for who we are within the church.

Sincere (Openness and Honesty): Being genuine, an open book, dealing truthfully.

Self-controlled (Integrity and Objectivity): The Timothy example is 'not indulging in much wine' and that is still relevant.

Reliable (Accountability): The Timothy example is 'not pursuing dishonest gain' and that is still relevant.

Christian believer: The Timothy example is 'keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience' which adds a doctrinal element. PCC/DCC members should have a firm faith in the Christian Gospel.

Faithful home life: The Timothy example includes both sexual faithfulness (still completely relevant) and family discipline. The latter point is applied with sensitivity within today's culture where bringing up the 'perfect family' does not always work out as we might wish.

Note that the Nolan idea of leadership is covered in the very similar Timothy list for overseers in verses 1-7.

Other passages with principles to consider:

- Acts 6:3 ('full of the Spirit and wisdom')
- Galatians 5:22,23 (the fruit of the Spirit: 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control')
- Colossians 1:10 ('a life worthy of the Lord')
- Matthew 20:25-28 ('Whoever wants to become great ... must be your servant')

Application to PCC meetings

The following shows how the Nolan and biblical principles will work out in practice regarding PCC meetings. These are in addition to actions already listed within the principles section. Note that it is the role of the Chair to ensure that normal rules of behaviour in debate are followed.

Application: Overall

We shall seek to work towards the PCC/DCC role of promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church, rather than prioritising matters of minor or administrative detail.

We shall seek to understand and promote the church's vision and values, its structures and processes.

We shall always seek to build the team of the PCC/DCC by being willing, among other points, to be vulnerable, seeking the common good, getting to know the other members and understanding their points of view.

We shall seek to attend church services, mid-week groups and sessions for prayer as often as we can as we role model Christian leadership to the whole church.

We shall pray regularly for our meetings and for other members of the Council.

We shall seek the views of a wide range of church members to inform us of viewpoints held.

We shall respect any request for confidentiality in views expressed, news shared or decisions taken.

We shall never use the distribution of letters, emails or social media messages to church or PCC members to canvas opinions or engage support for a view we hold without the Chair's express permission.

We shall take an appropriate interest in the work of any church staff whom we employ.

Application: Meetings

We shall prepare for meetings thoroughly by studying the agenda, reading papers sent to us, discussing issues with other Council members, and praying for each meeting.

After a meeting we shall study and check the minutes and be responsible for fulfilling any actions assigned to us by given dates.

We shall aim to prioritise PCC/DCC meetings in our diary and to arrive on time. If unable to attend we shall submit apologies in advance but still study the agenda and all papers, and the minutes afterwards.

We shall seek always to be constructive in meetings as we seek to come to a common mind keeping to the topic in hand. We shall respect the Chair's leadership of the meeting in all respects.

We shall seek to engage in discussion by listening carefully to what others have said rather than just focusing on our own interests.

We shall express disagreement in a courteous and constructive manner, challenging ideas not individuals, and seeking to engage with each other's views. We shall be careful not to cause pain and distress in what we say or how we say it.

We shall aim to be self-controlled in meetings and offer alternative views, where appropriate, with care and grace.

We shall support a decision taken by the PCC/DCC as the will of the Council, even if we personally disagree with it.

Discipline

The hope is that this section will rarely be required but it needs to be in place for when a specific need arises. Should a PCC/DCC member fail to observe this Code through unacceptable behaviour during a meeting and after appropriate warning from the Chair, the following procedure will be followed.

1. The Chair will ask the PCC/DCC member to leave the meeting.
2. The member will only be allowed to return to that meeting by majority vote of the remaining PCC/DCC members present.
3. Repeated acts of unacceptable behaviour may result in an invitation to consider their membership of the Council.
4. As the Code of Conduct is voluntary the incumbent and Church Wardens will make every effort to understand the person's argument, and to bring matters to a satisfactory solution in a way that enables the Council to conduct its business effectively.
5. On less abrasive issues (such as PCC/DCC members arriving late for meetings or failing to be regular in church attendance) the Chair will bring this Code to the attention of the Council and seek its proper application.