ANGLICANNG GUIDE

Setting up your parish page

The five questions a parish page is not worth showing anybody without, and what to do the week after.

For the priest or churchwarden whose parish has just been approved

Before you start

Your parish has been approved, which means it already has a live page at its own address and a dashboard behind it. What it does not yet have is anything worth showing a stranger.

There are five questions between you and a page you would be glad to send someone. They are asked one at a time under **Setting up your page** on your dashboard, and none of them is permanent — every answer can be changed afterwards on its own screen. You do not have to finish in one sitting. Where you had got to is worked out afresh from the page itself each time you return, so you can stop in the middle of a Tuesday and pick it up the following week.

Two things are worth having to hand before you begin: **one good photograph of the church**, and the **email address of somebody else** who should be able to post.

Not sure where to start, or not the person who normally does this? WhatsApp us on 09160904343 and somebody on our side will sit with you — over the phone or on a video call — and set the page up alongside you. It usually takes under an hour.

Say who you are

This is the first question because it is the fastest, and because somebody deciding on a Saturday night whether to come tomorrow reads this and very little else.

A paragraph or two is enough. How the church began, roughly how many of you there are, and what a stranger will actually find if they walk in on Sunday morning — how long the service runs, whether anyone will speak to them, whether their children will be all right. That last part is worth more than the founding date, and almost nobody writes it.

> Write it as if you were answering a neighbour who asked. Text that reads as though a person wrote it is the single clearest sign that a church is alive; text that reads as though it came out of a template is the clearest sign it is not.

Your service times

More people come to a church website for this than for everything else on it put together. If nothing else on your page is ever filled in, fill in this.

You were given a starter timetable the day your page went live. That is why this step asks you to look at it rather than to fill it in from nothing: an empty timetable is worse than a rough one, so the platform puts up a standard Anglican week — a Sunday Communion and daily early morning prayer — and then asks you to confirm it. Confirm it or change it, but do not leave it unread. A parish that meets at seven and advertises nine turns people away at the door.

Anything that happens *every week* belongs here. Anything with a single date — harvest, a confirmation, the carol service — belongs in Events instead. A service that has to move for a funeral, or a meeting skipped over Christmas, can be cancelled or moved for that one week on the schedule screen without disturbing the standing timetable.

If you stream a service, put the link on it under More options. Your YouTube channel address plays whatever you are streaming at the time, so it only has to be set once. The service then gets its own watch page on your site, with that day's bulletin, the collect, the readings and the words of the hymns beneath the video, so somebody at home can follow the service and sing along. A week streamed somewhere else can carry its own link on the schedule screen.

One photograph

The image across the top of your page is the first thing anybody sees, and it does more than any paragraph to say whether a congregation is alive. The building on a clear morning, or people leaving after a service, is worth far more than a stock photograph of an open Bible.

A phone photograph is fine. Waiting until somebody with a real camera is available usually means waiting for ever. Two or three images is plenty — they rotate, and a dozen means nobody sees most of them.

Every picture you upload goes into your media library, and every other screen that needs an image picks from that same pool. You will never have to find and upload the same photograph twice.

Your first post

A page with nothing on it reads as abandoned, however well the rest is filled in. A paragraph about last Sunday will do.

Anything you would put in a parish newsletter belongs here: a report on the harvest, a note about a bereavement, a word from the vicar, a thank-you to whoever cleaned the church. It does not have to be long and it does not have to be polished. A page that has not changed in three weeks reads as closed, which is why the platform will quietly remind you when yours has gone quiet.

A post can be written now and published later — set a date and it appears on its own, with nobody needing to be at a computer.

Somebody besides you

A site run from one account goes quiet the week that person travels. This is the question most often skipped and the one that most often decides, a year later, whether the page is still being kept.

A warden or a communications officer can be given their own way in, without borrowing your password and without being able to change anything you would rather they did not. They do not need an account yet — invite the email address you have, and the seat is held for them until they register with it.

Taking gifts online

This one is optional, and plenty of parishes will never want it. It is offered while you are setting up and it will never hold the list open.

If you do want it: a **fund** is what a gift is given towards — the building, the harvest, a particular appeal. Members choose one when they give. Gifts settle to your own bank account, not to the platform, so the payout details have to be filled in before anything can be paid out. A giver may choose to cover the transaction fee themselves, so the amount you receive is the amount they meant to give.

Only an owner or a treasurer on your team, or somebody holding a finance office in the parish, can see the money. Before a fund can go live, four things have to be true, and the Giving page ticks them off in order:

- **A standing checklist** the platform checks for itself — contact details, a place on the map, service times, time live and enough members.
- **An endorsement** from the body above your parish, asked for once with a note on what the money is for.
- **A bank account in the church's own name.** A personal account is refused, however trusted its holder.

- **Room** — only so many fundraisers may run at once.

That is deliberate: money raised in the name of a church is worth being slow about. Every owner is emailed when anybody else connects or removes the bank account.

Once a fund is live, its page can launch the appeal in church on a projector, and at harvest it can run a **bazaar auction**: donated lots called one at a time, bid for by paddle number from phones or from the floor, each lot sold becoming a pledge on the fund. The screen shows paddle numbers, never names.

The week after

Setting up happens once. Keeping the page tended is weekly, and that is a much smaller job.

Your dashboard turns it into a short list of specific, answerable things — is this Sunday's bulletin out, has anything been posted lately, is the diary empty, is anybody on the rota, has anyone written in and not been answered. Twice a week, on a Thursday and a Monday, whatever is still outstanding arrives by email, because no volunteer warden is going to think to ask "is our page up to date?" unprompted.

The one piece of the week worth learning properly is the **bulletin**. It is built from records you already keep — the day's collect, your weekly timetable, the events in your diary, whoever is on the rota — so most of the Sunday sheet is filled in before you type anything. It also stays editable after the service, so notices read from the pulpit that never reached the printed sheet can be added and everyone who opens it during the week sees them.

Once a year the **annual return** to the diocese is due. Open it from the Registers screen: the baptisms, confirmations, marriages and funerals, banns, pastoral visits, members, meetings and giving the parish recorded here are already counted, so what is left is a handful of figures only the parish knows. File it from the same screen, and print a copy for the vestry to sign. Filing a return never costs anything.

When a member moves away, they ask for a **letter of transfer** from their profile, and the request waits for you under Transfers on the Registers screen. The letter is drafted from your records; change what you like and issue it, and it prints with a code the new parish can scan to confirm you wrote it. A member moving to you arrives on the same screen, to be received into your congregation. Certificates of baptism, confirmation, marriage and burial print from the register the same way, each with its own code, and can be withdrawn.

A parish that has bought a **web address of its own** can show this page at it. Type the name into Settings, add the two records it gives you where you bought the name — one that proves the name is yours, one that points it at us — and it answers within the hour, padlock and all. Your platform address goes on working, so a poster already printed is not wasted. This one is on the Premier plan; everything else in this guide is free.

Bringing your members in

Your page is for strangers; your members are the people already in the pews. **Members** on your dashboard lists everyone who has named your church as their home parish, and when each of them was last here.

Look down it for the faces you see on Sunday but not here. Your **invite link** is on that screen: share it on the parish WhatsApp group, or print the poster for the notice board. Anybody who joins through it has your church as their home parish straight away. When some of them go quiet, an owner or editor can send them a short note from the parish — never more than once a month.

Not everybody opens an app, so the note can also go by **text message** to the members who have confirmed their number and asked for texts. So can the link to a newly published bulletin, and the reminder for a service. Texts are paid for with credits, which an owner buys from **Text messages** on the Members screen; every send shows what it will cost first, and credits for a text that is not delivered come back.

Who is allowed to do what

Give the smallest role that lets somebody do their job. A contributor is what lets you hand writing to a willing volunteer without handing over the parish.

- **Website Owner** — Everything, including who else is on the team, the page's own settings, the confidential records and the money.
- **Post Editor** — Writes and publishes anything, including other people's work, and runs the rota, meetings, prayer wall, enquiries and members list. Not the team, settings, records or money.
- **Post Author** — Writes and publishes their own posts, and cannot touch anybody else's.
- **Contributor** — Writes posts as drafts, which wait for an editor or owner to publish them.
- **Treasurer** — Runs online giving and the bank account gifts settle into, and nothing else.
- **Subscriber** — No access to the dashboard.

Registers, banns, transfers and the pastoral care log are for owners alone. They never appear on your public page, and reach another church only as a letter or certificate you choose to issue.

Everything anyone on your team does is written to your parish's own activity log, which an owner can read.