

## Staying safe online

Using the internet, from a mobile phone, tablet, laptop or personal computer helps us to stay in touch with family and friends and access information, online shopping, entertainment and worship.

Many of us have increased our use of the internet during the pandemic, communicating more by email and using Zoom, FaceTime and other ways of staying in touch, as well as worshipping online. We have been grateful for it.

Just as you take precautions in day to day life, such as locking the door of your house and being careful in public places, so it is important to take safety measures to safeguard yourself online. Here are a few reminders of how we can keep ourselves and others safe, as important online as with face to face contacts.

### Top Tips for Staying Safe Online

1. Lock your devices such as your phone or laptop with a strong password, just as you would lock the door to your house. This can help to protect your information if your device is lost or stolen.
2. Use strong passwords, not something personal to you and never share them with anyone. Use a different password for your device and your email account.
3. Don't open emails or attachments from someone you don't know; this is a way that criminals can use to bypass your security systems.
4. Avoid clicking on a link in an email which looks strange, even if you know the person who sent it. If it looks strange it's best to delete it.
5. Ignore emails or other communications which create a sense of urgency, urging you to respond immediately to a crisis such as an issue with your bank account or TV licence. This type of message is often a scam. Think before you act.
6. Always question requests for personal information; criminals can impersonate your bank or the police or anyone you trust so that they can steal your information or money. Always take time to check up on the request through a trusted source; do not phone back on the number the caller has given you.
7. When sending an email to multiple addresses, send it to yourself and blind copy (bcc) the other recipients. Otherwise anyone can see other people's email addresses.
8. If hosting a Zoom meeting, only allow in people you have invited or know.
9. Do not share the details of a Zoom meeting with other people. It is for the host to invite people.

As with any other safeguarding concerns, contact the Police in an emergency. If not so urgent, then speak to your Minister, your Church Safeguarding Officer or Karen Emms, the Circuit Safeguarding Officer.