

**PRESS RELEASE FROM ALEX CHALK MP: Chalk brings Facebook Live to Cheltenham for trailblazing internet safety event**

Facebook Live - with 8 billion interactions in 2016 - is coming to Cheltenham, as the town's MP steps up his national social media campaign. Having organised a debate in Parliament to highlight the impact of social media on teenage mental health, and more recently launched a national Parliamentary Inquiry, he has now invited Facebook to take part in a 'LIVE' internet safety session with local parents and pupils at Bournside School on Thursday 16 March at 5.30pm.

The pioneering event will also be broadcast on Mr Chalk's Facebook page. It will give parents, carers and young people the chance to hear from Facebook about their new online safety campaign and the ways social media can be harnessed for positive change. It will also provide an opportunity to raise any specific concerns, issues or suggestions for improvement they may have for Facebook, as well as Instagram and Whatsapp (who are also owned by Facebook).

The session will be 'interactive', giving Cheltonians who cannot make the event in person, the opportunity to submit questions in advance via Mr Chalk's Facebook page. They will even be able to ask them live on the night from the comfort of their own homes via the 'Live' facility.

Commenting on the event, Mr Chalk said "'I'm delighted that Facebook have agreed to come to Cheltenham for this pioneering event and I'm grateful to Bournside for hosting. Social media has been a hugely positive force for change in many areas but I remain concerned about the impact it can have on teenage mental health. That's why I organised a debate on this subject in Parliament last year and have just launched a Parliamentary Inquiry in conjunction with two national mental health charities to investigate this issue. I would strongly encourage local parents and pupils to come along to hear from the world's biggest social network about the positive steps they are taking to tackle trolling, body shaming, bullying and more, as well as highlighting where you think there is room for improvement in order to keep our children safe and happy online."

Allan Foulds, Head teacher of Bournside School, added: "As a Technology Enhanced Learning School we welcome this live and online opportunity. It is fitting to recognise the advantages of social media communication and also to work in ways to improve some of its inherent difficulties. This event promises to be lively and engaging and breaks new ground"

**ENDS**