



Renee Coulson, Vicar of Seend

Computer Hacker Tricks Seend Vicar's Friends Out Of Money

The Rev Renée Coulson, the vicar of Seend, Poulshot and Bulkington, has appealed to her friends not to respond to appeals for money ostensibly coming from her after her computer was hacked. Mrs Coulson, who has been vicar for the villages since 2009, was horrified to find that her computer had been interfered with and that emails had been sent to her friends. Some have already sent money in response to the appeal.

She told the Gazette: "I am totally distraught about the whole mess, for that very reason."

She added: "On top of that, my contacts list of over 300 has been corrupted and so I have to amend each one individually but, even worse than that, my emails have all been wiped - sent, received and stored. You can imagine what problems that will cause me over the next few weeks and months. "One good thing I have learned through this exercise is that Western Union will stop the payment going through, provided they know in time. So it's vital people get in touch with them direct if they have sent money. An admin fee will be payable but it's better to pay that than the almost £800 everyone is being asked to send.

"It should be stressed that no-one should ever send any money in response to an email without first checking the person personally, by actually trying to reach that person on their phone, regardless of what the email might say, calling at their house (if practicable) or checking with a friend, neighbour or work colleague.

"Put simply, they should never trust an email of this nature - not at least without asking a question that only they know the answer to.

"I have done everything possible to mitigate the problems for others, by contacting all my email addresses, and leaving a message on my answerphone confirming this is a scam.

"The police confirmed there are several similar ones circulating at the moment and advised that people should call them on 101 to report it."

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