

ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT TO APCM

Year ending December 2021

Policies and practice

The clergy and PCCs of the benefice continue to meet the requirement to have due regard to guidance issued by the House of Bishops on matters relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding continues to be a standing item on every agenda of the PCC meetings

All safeguarding policies were updated and approved in December 2020 at the Joint PCC meeting. They are all in line with the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance and meet statutory requirements whilst remaining relevant to our particular context. The next reviews will be in May 2022.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team have introduced a new Parish Safeguarding Dashboard. This is an online tool which allows PSOs to complete an audit of safeguarding policy and practice in the parish. Following the audit, an action plan is automatically generated to assist them in maintaining and improving their safeguarding practices. The benefice has signed up to this and the audits are currently being completed by the PSO. The subsequent action plans will be shared with the PCCs in due course.

The Diocesan Safeguarding team have also recently implemented Parish Safeguarding Officer network meetings. This enables the PSO to meet up and share issues with PSOs from other parishes. These meetings are extremely helpful and are providing good opportunities to share issues with those in both similar and contrasting settings, as well as being able to ask questions from the Diocesan Safeguarding team. For example, at the most recent meeting, it became clear that many parishes have concerns about vulnerable adults in their community, a problem which has been amplified by the isolation resulting from the Covid pandemic. This may be something which PCCs would consider to be a priority in our benefice during the coming year.

Safer recruitment

The online system for DBS clearance is now well established. Applications for recently elected PCC members are underway, in addition to renewals where applicable.

Currently, there are no other volunteers who require DBS clearance, but this is always under review.

Thank you to everyone for their willingness to go through this process, your cooperation has been much appreciated.

Training

In April 2021, the Church of England published a new Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework. The focus of this framework is on developing a positive culture of safeguarding within the church, rather than simply focusing on process. It does mean that additional training modules may need to be completed. Some PCC members have already completed the new Foundation training module and have commented on its positive Christian perspective and usefulness.

Currently, there are no other volunteers who need to complete any safeguarding training, but again, this is always kept under review.

Safeguarding concerns and incidents

No safeguarding concerns have been raised during the year. However, we need to maintain our vigilance to ensure the protection and well-being of everyone in our communities.

Ali Pepper

Parish Safeguarding Officer

February 2022