

Parishes of the Meon Bridge Benefice Safeguarding Policy 2022

<http://www.bridgechurches.org.uk>

The Parishes of The Meon Bridge Benefice (Corhampton and St Andrew, Meonstoke, St Mary and All Saints, Droxford and St Peter and St Paul, Exton) are committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of the children within our church community and to encouraging an environment where all people and especially those who may be vulnerable are able to worship and pursue their faith journey with encouragement and in safety.

We are also committed to the implementation of the Diocese of Portsmouth Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, and the relevant statutory legislation and guidance for the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. (<https://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/safeguarding> and <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/safeguarding>).

Benefice Safeguarding Policy Statement

Every year the PCCs will review and agree the Benefice Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy Statement, displaying each copy in the Church and forwarding one copy of each to the Diocesan Safeguarding Office for their records.

Parish Safeguarding Officer

The PCCs will appoint a minimum of one Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) who will be responsible on behalf of the incumbent and PCC for implementing the Diocesan policy in respect of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The PSO agrees to undertake the key responsibilities of the role as outlined in the Diocesan Safeguarding Guide. Our PSO is Mrs Ali Pepper.

Promoting a safer environment and culture

We will ensure that all reasonable steps have been taken to safeguard vulnerable groups in order that they can participate fully in any pastoral, social and other PCC endorsed or approved activities and events, safe from harm and abuse.

The following activities and events have been identified as those which are associated with vulnerable groups and run in the name of the church:

- **Children's Activities, Groups and Events**

The following children's, young person's and mixed age activities have been identified as PCC endorsed events and activities that fall under the Diocesan Safeguarding Procedures.

- All Age Informal Worship (Droxford and Meonstoke)
- Confirmation and Older Children's Group

Currently (May 2022), there are no other events where children are left without their parents or carers.

- **Vulnerable Adults Activities, Groups and Events**

The following have been identified as PCC endorsed groups, events and activities that fall under the Diocesan Safeguarding Procedures:

- Pastoral Care Visiting
- Parish morning coffee
- Home Communion
- Small groups meeting in homes

For these events, we will:

- Designate a group leader where necessary

- Ensure all children and young people wishing to attend any activity supervised by Benefice staff or nominees will be provided with a Registration Form, which must be completed and signed by their parents/carers before they take part.
- Ensure that children who wish to take part in additional events such as church outings, holidays or sleepovers will not be allowed to participate in such activities unless the leaders of such event(s) receive a completed consent form from the parents or guardians of the child concerned, even if the parent or guardian accompanies the child on any such trip or activity. A new form must be completed for each separate activity.
- Give consideration at all times for the health, safety and welfare of each child and young person, including supervision ratios, transport, first aid, premises and children with special needs.
- Give consideration at all times for the health, safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult, including transport, first aid, premises and adults with special needs.
- Ensure risk assessments are carried out before the activity takes place and these are reviewed regularly
- Provide appropriate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the Benefice PCCs

Hire of Church Premises

- All those who book or use the church premises on a regular basis shall be required to sign a copy of the parish booking agreement and a declaration that they have read and understand the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, or that they agree to abide by their own organisation's safeguarding procedures.

Safer Recruitment of paid workers and volunteers

We are committed to ensuring that all church officers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and have the core skills and knowledge to protect children and/or vulnerable adults from harm. The Church of England's Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework 2021 sets out the expectations and requirements for safeguarding training for all ordained and lay church officers, whether they are paid or unpaid. To support this, the Diocese of Portsmouth provides a training pathway which all church officers are expected to follow, to ensure their safeguarding training is up to date (See Benefice Safeguarding Training Policy).

We will:

- Ensure we have clear role descriptions and/or person specifications for all posts working or volunteering with children and/or adults
- Ensure we carry out all necessary vetting procedures (see below)
- Ensure that all applicants with children and adults are interviewed
- Offer support and training after appointment
- Provide a written behaviour code for all workers with children and/or adults
- Ensure all church leaders and those who work with children and/or adults complete appropriate safeguarding training at least every three years.

All those who undertake work in a regulated activity with children and/or vulnerable adults in the parishes on a voluntary or paid basis will be required to:

- Complete a Confidential Self Declaration Form
- To complete the necessary DBS application (DBS) every three years, or sooner if the individual moves to a new post, (unless the application was obtained in the previous six months and the nature of the work is similar or the applicant is registered with the Update Service).

We will seek to ensure that a DBS check is only requested after a risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position (paid or voluntary) concerned. Using the appropriate risk assessment procedures, the following parish posts have been identified as requiring a DBS check:

- The Parish Safeguarding Officer(s)
- Members of the PPC (as Trustees of the charity)
- Church wardens
- Licensed Lay Ministers (Readers) and other Lay Leaders
- All Age Service volunteer helpers

- Organists, when there are children or young adults in the choir
- Leader / Conductor of the choir, when there are children or young adults in the choir

Any person refusing such checks will not be allowed to work with or have unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults in the Benefice.

All Confidential Self Declarations Forms, references and results of DBS checks will be held securely by the PSO.

Responding to safeguarding concerns

We will ensure that anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the church will be responded to respectfully and in a timely manner, in line with legislation, statutory and national safeguarding policy and procedures.

We will:

- Appoint at least one lay Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) for children and adults
- Ensure there are arrangements in place to cover if the PSO is not available
- Develop a written procedure for dealing with abuse and allegations and make this available to all church officers
- Clearly display contact details of the PSO and the Diocesan Safeguarding team, as well as local and national services available to get help with safeguarding issues
- Store personal information and safeguarding records securely and ensure information needed in an emergency is readily available
- Ensure all church officers are aware of their responsibilities in regard to the recording, storage and sharing of information

Care of Survivors of abuse

We will ensure that those who have suffered abuse will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and taken seriously.

Managing risk

When it is known that a member of the church community may pose a risk to children and/or adults, we will consult without delay with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser so that a safe course of action in accordance with national and local safeguarding policy and procedures is followed, in conjunction with the relevant statutory agencies.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the PCC and amended as appropriate.

SIGNED AND AGREED:

Incumbent:	_____	<u>The Rev'd A W Forrest</u>	
Churchwarden/s:	_____	Mrs A Peagram	Corhampton and
	_____	Mr Colin Mathiessen	<u>Meonstoke</u>
	_____		Droxford
	_____	Mr R Pepys	Exton
Safeguarding			
Representative/s:	<u>Alien Pepper</u>	Mrs Ali Pepper	
Approved:	15 th May 2022	Review Date:	By 15 May 2023

