

Safeguarding Report for Annual Parochial Church Meeting. 23rd May 2021

Each year, every diocese in the C of E asks PCC's to complete a questionnaire called the Articles of Enquiry. This enables Archdeacons to stay up to date with key information about the churches in their diocese. This year the questionnaire focused on Safeguarding.

Our responses to the Articles of Enquiry 2021 were generally reassuring. They showed that the recommended safeguards are in place, our policies are put into practice and show due regard for the House of Bishops' rulings.

- Our Safeguarding policy and procedure **is** displayed prominently. (In fact, our notice boards have recently been rearranged to give more space to safeguarding information).
- Visual aids from the diocese **are** on display.
- Newsletters contain occasional safeguarding **reminders** to the congregation.
- DBS checks **are** up to date.
We needed a new DBS Administrator. John Wiggins has now taken that responsibility.
- **Most** people have completed the basic training for their roles in church. Since October 2020 five people have completed training in Domestic Abuse Awareness, **in addition** to their basic training. One or two still need to do so. Some PCC member's need training in Safer Recruitment, but this is not currently available from the C of E.

An area in which we needed to formalise our actions was that of Risk Assessment. While we had in place a comprehensive Risk Assessment covering Health & Safety and Safeguarding for the church building and religious services, we needed to develop a generic risk assessment for activities other than religious services. Thanks go to John Sturgeon for providing a comprehensive, generic risk assessment for our Youth Activities.

The PCC needs to be advised of one-off events and activities for any age group and to authorise them before they take place. Separate risk assessments are needed for each of these. We also require hirers of our church premises to follow our safeguarding and risk assessment guidelines and copies of these form part of our lettings agreements.

Another area we have been required to address more rigorously is that of Safer Recruitment. Historically, few people have been employed by ASD and those who have been employed have been well known to the congregation beforehand and so their engagement has been informal. This year the diocese has required the safeguarding measures for Safer Recruitment to be put in place retrospectively. For this reason appropriate contracts have been drawn up for Carolyn Carter as Ministerial Assistant and Loice Mamdizvidzn as Café Manager.

There is increasing pressure for churches to use Volunteer Agreements, as well as Employee contracts. These set out the responsibilities of volunteer roles and time scales for them to be undertaken. The PCC has resisted so far. We have all worked extremely well together during our interregnum and the confines of Covid and we feel no urgency to formalise arrangements. It may be that we will need to reconsider at some point, but in this we will be led by our new vicar.

I would like to thank the whole congregation, as well as PCC members, for their cooperation and support in taking on board the requirements of safeguarding compliance. While the intention behind them is protective, like a lot of legislation, the minutiae can appear and feel restrictive. Thank you for your patience and friendliness, everyone.

Jackie Wiggins

(Parish Safeguarding Officer)