

Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2024 Safeguarding Officer's Report

1. I was appointed Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) at the PCC meeting on 18/9/23 and attended a PSO Induction course run by the Diocese in March 2024.
2. The PCC adopted a Parish Safeguarding Policy (otherwise known as a 'Promoting a Safer Church' policy statement) at its meeting on 15 January 2024. A notice concerning safeguarding that specifies I am PSO has been put in the Church porch. If you would like to read the Policy (and you are encouraged to do so), please ask Sally (Churchwarden) or me for a copy.
3. Gemma Brooking was appointed DBS administrator at the PCC meeting 15 January 2024. Gemma is in the process of carrying out DBS checks in relation to all members of the PCC (including the Churchwarden and PSO). I have not been informed of the outcome of these checks.
4. At its meeting on 15 January 2024, the PCC reviewed the list of church activities and concluded that there are no activities that need to be listed as the Church does not carry out activities that are organised primarily for children, young people or vulnerable adults or include teaching, training, instructing, caring for, supervising or transporting children, young people and vulnerable adults.
5. I have completed all the safeguarding courses that the Diocese recommends for Parish Safeguarding Officers (Basic, Foundation, Leadership, Domestic Abuse, Safer Recruitment and PSO Induction). The Churchwarden and 3 other members of the PCC have completed the Basic and Foundation courses. It is believed that one member of the PCC has undertaken adequate training for her work. The Diocese requires that all members of PCCs complete the Foundation and Domestic Abuse courses and recommends that Churchwardens also undertake the Leadership course.
6. I have accessed the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard (which is made available to each parish by the Diocese) and kept it updated. The dashboard shows 65% progress. One task to prioritise is completion of role descriptions for churchwarden, PCC members, Deanery Synod member and PSO. This will assist in future recruitment. Finalisation of DBS checks and completion of required training by all PCC members will also enable the dashboard to show more progress (note that the dashboard has a yes/no answer to the question about training so completion of some training but not all of it isn't reflected in the amount of progress achieved).

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7. I would like to draw to your attention to the following that I became aware of as a result of the PSO Induction course:
 - a. The Safeguarding Team at the Diocese are available (at any time) to provide guidance in relation to safeguarding issues and welcome involvement. They were keen to impress that we are not alone in this. They were also keen for us to see safeguarding protections as an aspect of love and care for church members and members of our community with whom we're in contact.
 - b. The structure of the Diocesan approach is driven by the national church approach, which is itself driven by focus on what is appropriate for larger churches (or central organisations of churches) engaged in considerable activity and who are responsible for clergy. The Diocesan Safeguarding Team is aware that there may be a mismatch with what can reasonably be expected in smaller churches that don't have responsibility for engaging clergy or other staff. I impressed on them the need to design an approach that is appropriate for small rural churches. While I believe they would like to do this, they feel constrained by the national approach laid down.
 - c. Around 90% of the issues reported to the Diocese Safeguarding Team relate to *adults*. It is therefore an over-simplification (and misleading) to consider safeguarding primarily as a matter relating to children or processes simply being put in place as a response to historic issues concerning the abuses of children and young people.
 - d. The church's responsibility is in respect of those commissioned by the church to undertake ministry on its behalf. It is not responsible for action undertaken by church members in their personal capacity, although such people need to be careful not to give the impression they are acting on behalf of the church (for example, in relation to visiting neighbours who may be in distressed circumstances).
 - e. It is recommended that contact details for the PSO are dedicated numbers or addresses rather than personal ones. At the moment my personal number and email are publicised.

8. I confirm that no-one has reported a safeguarding concern to me and I have no reason to believe there are any safeguarding concerns of which I or the PCC should be aware.

Richard King
13 May 2024