

## **ANNUAL PCC SAFEGUARDING REPORT – APRIL 2019**

### **INTRODUCTION**

I asked the individual Church Safeguarding Officers for the following information:

- Any safeguarding issues/incidents
- Numbers of DBS checks/voluntary declaration forms completed
- Any outstanding DBS checks
- Number of attendees at C1 and C2 training courses
- Confirmation that we are compliant with Diocese Safeguarding guidelines

This has been a time of change for Safeguarding in Horsham: I took over as Parish Safeguarding Officer halfway through the reporting period, as did 2 of the 4 Church Safeguarding Officers. Suffice to say, it has been a bit of a learning curve for all concerned. I am pleased to report that I have met all the Safeguarding Officers and set out my vision for standardisation and compliance across the Parish.

Also, Safeguarding has moved on significantly from the simplistic “Child Protection” of a decade ago. It is a serious and multifaceted subject and I would like to offer the following quote from The Diocese of Chichester’s Safeguarding website for consideration:

“Safeguarding is a complex area of church life - how do we keep children and adults safe from harm, whilst building communities of trust and openness, and which demonstrate the welcome the Gospel offers to all? Moreover, how do we build church communities that obey the biblical mandate to defend those who are weak, heal those who are hurt, and demonstrate God's forgiveness to all, for all have sinned?”

Forgive me for highlighting the above paragraph but I feel it is important to take a moment to reflect on it and realise that it is all of our responsibility. In short, safeguarding is about the use and misuse of power, and the exploitation or protection of the vulnerable. It will take time for this to percolate through the whole church community.

### **THANKS**

I would like to thank all the Safeguarding Officers for their hard work, diligence and commitment. Not only is it a largely unseen role but also it is very time-consuming. And whilst I am not keen to mention individuals (for fear of offending those who aren’t mentioned), I will publicly thank Nigel Stalley. He has been an absolute stalwart and my first port of call if I have a query. His sage advice, wisdom and gentle guidance have been indispensable.

### **REPORT**

DBS Checks and Voluntary Declarations are an ongoing task and being well managed by the Safeguarding Officers. There are a few DBS checks outstanding but

they are merely a paperwork and administrative delay. Those that require it have attended C1 and C2 courses. I am pleased to report that we are all using Diocese Safeguarding Guidelines and are working towards Simple Quality Projects Level 1 (SQP1), which is the Diocese of Chichester standard. In accordance with SQP1 guidance, there is a requirement to have a Safeguarding link on the individual church's websites homepage. St Mary's and St Leonard's are compliant. Holy Trinity and St John's are working on theirs and I have highlighted the requirement.

The PCC has complied with section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 20.

#### **SAFEGUARDING INCIDENTS**

I am aware of one Safeguarding concern during this reporting period. It was addressed with a Safeguarding Adviser at Church House and the reporter was advised to complete a Concerns Form, which they duly did. No further action was deemed necessary.

This is a positive: People feel empowered to raise concerns and the correct process is followed.

#### **GOING FORWARD**

Safeguarding is under particular scrutiny from Chichester and I am committed to ensure compliance. However, this is not just a tick-box exercise and I am dedicated to ensuring the Church is a safe place for all. So, compliance is key. I am cognisant that some Safeguarding Officers want to retire; accordingly, I am working on a succession plan.

God bless

Richard Pearson

Parish Safeguarding Officer