

Safeguarding Report for 2021 APCM

Safeguarding is such an important area of church life – it is vital that we do all we can to ensure a safe environment for everyone in our care, and that we maintain a culture of informed vigilance - so that people clearly know what to do and where to go if they have any concerns.

Everyone who works/ volunteers at church is required to undertake (as a minimum) the Church of England's online "Basic Awareness" training module. Those with a further degree of responsibility are also expected to complete the "Foundation" module, and those in formal ministry/ lay ministry/ parish safeguarding officers must complete the more intensive "Leadership" level. Training must be renewed every 3 years. Those requiring DBS checks must renew every 5 years – I can report that these are all up-to-date. Christ Church Moreton Hall also requires the completion of "Confidential Declaration Forms" (also every 5 years) for those in positions of trust (such as PCC members or homegroup leaders) where a full DBS check is not required.

I am delighted to be able to report that we are very nearly up-to-date with all training requirements, and sincerely thank everyone who has taken the time and trouble to complete the training. A few people would like to do the training face-to-face rather than online, and this will be arranged with the diocese once Covid restrictions are lifted.

With formal church life much reduced this past year, you might think safeguarding would not be so much at the forefront of our thinking. Quite the contrary!...

Safeguarding is always on the agenda at every PCC meeting, and we have worked through/ updated various policies over the past year. These are available to view on the church website.

Vatha and Alex kindly created a risk assessment to ensure the safe running of the Hydr8 youth group on Zoom, and this was checked and agreed at PCC.

Safeguarding is now included on the hall hire form (thanks to Debbie and Jonathan Corwin for their help with this) and all users are asked to sign that, if appropriate, they have all necessary DBS checks and their own safeguarding policy (or that they agree to abide by ours).

Safeguarding reminders have been given in a few parish newsletters – thank you for reading them!

Anna Lomas and I have each attended a Parish Safeguarding Officer Zoom forum, run by Karen Galloway (the diocese safeguarding manager). These were really helpful occasions, where we met other PSOs and could share both good practice and also challenges. One of the main topics at these forums was the rollout of a new safeguarding system in the diocese, called "Parish Dashboards". This is a green-amber-red traffic light system, which highlights at a glance where action is needed, and gives advice on completing outstanding areas. Action Plans can be created to present at each PCC meeting, to clearly highlight the next priority areas.

Parish Dashboards were introduced to Thingoe Deanery in February 2021, and we have made a good start at working through our CCMH dashboard, completing all that we can achieve in Level 1, and moving onto Level 2 (of 3 levels).

My particular thanks go to Anna Lomas, who has been such a great support in the PSO role, and to the whole PCC for patiently reading and checking different policies and plans! I am also very grateful to both Jonathan Ford and Lesley Williams for their ongoing support and advice in so many areas of safeguarding.

Heather Lovell, Churchwarden and PSO, 12th April 2021