

Christ Church Dartford
APCM Safeguarding Report (May 2019- October 2020)

As a church we have adopted the House of Bishops Safeguarding Policies and work closely with the Rochester Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

The Diocesan Team has seen several changes in this period. Janice Keen has retired, and Greg Barry is now Lead Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor. He has been joined by Claire Langridge and Caroline Smith. Contact numbers can be found on the safeguarding posters displayed in church and the church hall and on the Diocesan website.

There has been a National Past Cases Review for all churches to ensure that all cases involving clergy and church officers have been reported appropriately. The review also invited anyone who wished to make a disclosure to come forward. This has been completed at Christ Church.

A safeguarding pledge was launched in February 2020 by Thirtyone:eight as part of a movement of change in safeguarding culture following a succession of investigations and reports into failings by churches to protect children and vulnerable adults. The pledge commits churches to standing in solidarity with abuse survivors and commits them to taking tangible steps towards ensuring a safe environment. This has been signed by Richard on behalf of Christ Church.

We completed the Diocesan Safeguarding Audit in May 2019, which showed only one area out of thirty needed to be developed at Christ Church: the induction of staff and volunteers. This work has begun and there is a new policy, to be introduced in the next few months by the National Safeguarding Team, that covers this area. This will give clear expectations of requirements and will be adopted when published.

Richard and I hosted a local safeguarding meeting for deanery clergy and safeguarding officers in October 2019. Greg Barry spoke about safeguarding requirements and we shared good practice.

In June 2019 Lynne, on behalf of Christ Church, attended the diocesan training about domestic abuse. In October 2020 I attended training about safeguarding vulnerable adults.

Everyone, whose role requires it, has an up to date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate at the appropriate level. There were 14 people with a new or renewed DBS certificate in the reporting period.

During the pandemic, every aspect of how we meet as church has changed. I have worked with the church leadership team to ensure that all activities undertaken during this time are safe for children, young people and adults who are vulnerable. Advice from the government, Church of England and the Diocese, in regard to safeguarding, has been followed.

To safeguard well we are all responsible: *'speak up, put survivors first, conceal nothing, take responsibility, make change happen and hold each other accountable'* Safeguarding pledge with Thirtyone:eight.

Gill Smith