

APCM 2025 – Safeguarding Report

HSM Safeguarding Officer: Robin Bishop

General

Whilst the Clergy, PCC members and Pastoral Visitors have particular safeguarding responsibilities *it remains incumbent upon anyone with HSM to take responsibility for safeguarding*. The failings of the past must not be repeated. A concern of any sort should be shared with the Clergy &/or the PSO.

The PCC has Safeguarding as an agenda item at every meeting.

The PCC takes seriously its collective responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable. It has complied with due regard to House of Bishops guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

PCC Members and Pastoral Visitors are required to undertake regular safeguarding training. The Church of England requires PCC members and PVs to complete Basic (C0) and Foundation (C1) level training and additionally the course raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse (RADA). C0 needs to be taken only once. All other courses need to be re-taken every three years. The Parish Safeguarding Officer is required to take also Leadership training (C2). One of the Wardens/Treasurer/PSO is required to undertake Safer Recruitment training (S1). The PSO has completed the course.

PCC Members and PVs are required to complete an enhanced DBS check. These checks are undertaken by Thirtyone:eight and are valid for three years.

HSM's Safeguarding Risk Assessments for all activities involving children and young people are reviewed annually at the November PCC meeting together with all other policies. A copy of all HSM's policies which include 'Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults', 'Lone Worker' and 'Safer Recruitment' are kept on the church website and in a folder at the entrance of the church. The Diocese requires a number of Safeguarding posters to be displayed, all of which can be found in the South porch

The Diocese of St Albans support every church's safeguarding practices in a number of ways:

- Regular safeguarding newsletters ensure that parishes are kept up to date with current legislation and of any changes to policies, procedures and training requirements.
- The 'Parish Dashboard'. This is a useful online portal which records all the safeguarding measures we take as a church including risk assessments completed and policies and their review date.
- The 'Parish Safeguarding Hub'. This stands alongside the Parish Dashboard and is designed to help with safer recruitment and people management. It contains details of all those who have completed training and DBS checks and generates automatic reminders when these are due to be renewed.
- Monthly Zoom drop-in sessions and an annual Safeguarding Forum for Parish Safeguarding Officers.
- Also on its website is a comprehensive set of policies, procedures and information documents, many of which have been used as a basis for HSM policies and procedures.

2025

Of those who are required to complete CoE courses, at the time of writing all current members/PVs are course compliant. Those elected after the APCM will need to complete courses.

Of those who are required to have a DBS check, at the time of writing all are in date. Those elected after the APCM will need to complete DBS (Enhanced) clearance.

The above notwithstanding, during the course of the year the PCC met all requests from the Diocese.

During the course of the year no referrals had been made to the PSO or to the Rector.

In 2024 the Church of England published their National Safeguarding Standards which asks all parishes to assess their safeguarding work against five standards:

Standard 1 - Culture, Leadership and Capacity

Standard 2 - Prevention

Standard 3 - Recognising, Assessing and Managing Risk

Standard 4 - Victims and Survivors

Standard 5 - Learning, Supervision and Support

The Diocese of St Albans has asked that PCCs review each of the five standards to examine safeguarding in their parish and identify their strengths and weaknesses. HSM PCC have agreed to review all standards