

The Camelot Parishes

Benefice and Parish Safeguarding Policy

Overall Objectives and Principles

The Church of England, in all aspects of its life, is committed to and will promote the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It fully accepts and endorses the Children Act 1989 & 2004 & The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

Christian communities should be places where all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse. The Church is particularly called by God to support those less powerful and those without a voice in our society. Our Parish is working towards creating a safe and non-discriminatory environment by being aware of some of the particular situations that create vulnerability. Issues which need to be considered include both the physical environment and the attitudes of workers and volunteers.

A person (adult or child) who might be considered vulnerable has the right to:

- Be treated with respect and dignity.
- Have their privacy respected.
- Be able to lead as independent a life as possible.
- Be able to choose how to lead their life.
- Have the protection of the law.
- Have their rights upheld regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background.
- Be able to use their chosen language or method of communication.
- Be heard.

In any situations where there may be a difference of opinion about priorities, the welfare of any child or vulnerable adult should be the paramount concern.

This Benefice will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. It will work with the Diocesan Safeguarding team, statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

We are committed to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child, young person or vulnerable adult or about the behaviour of an adult in a position of trust, and will work with the Diocesan Team, and the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation is necessary. We are also committed to the support of those who have been abused and to listening to the voices of survivors, who can help the church learn lessons from the past.

This statement of principles applies to children, young people and adults.

We are committed to:

- The care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- The safeguarding and protection of all children and adults
- The establishment of a safe, caring community which provides an environment where there is a culture of informed vigilance regarding the dangers of abuse, and where victims of abuse can report or disclose abuse and find support.
- The promotion of best practice that contributes to the prevention of abuse.

The safeguarding and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility, not just parents or those who have formal leadership or caring responsibilities. Procedures and formal processes alone, though essential, will not protect children and adults. The community, including all its members, needs to be aware of the dangers and be prepared to report concerns and take action if necessary.

In summary, we aim to provide a safe and accountable framework within which work with children, young people and vulnerable adults can take place. We agree to follow the Practice Guidance from the House of Bishops on safeguarding matters, and to adopt the Diocese of Bath and Wells Safeguarding Policies.

In particular, we adopt, support and uphold the House of Bishops' Promoting a Safer Church: Safeguarding Policy Statement for children, young people and adults which is available online on the Church of England's website under Safeguarding, Documents, Policy, Practice Guidance & Regulations. This emphasises that the care and protection of children, young people and adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of everyone who participates in the life of the Church. There are six overarching Policy Commitments namely to:-

- (a) Promote a safer environment and culture
- (b) Safely recruit and support all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults
- (c) Respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
- (d) Care pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons
- (e) Care pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns/allegations of abuse and other affected persons
- (f) Respond to those that may pose a present risk to others.

General Responsibilities

This Benefice accepts that, through its workers and volunteers, it is responsible for children, young people and vulnerable adults when in a church building, on church property and other premises being used by the church and during church activities. Responsibility extends to travel between places, when it is organized by the church. However, a church is not responsible for private arrangements.

The term 'complaint' can cover an allegation, disclosure or statement, something seen or something heard. The complaint need not be made in writing but once received it must be recorded and acted upon. Complaints can be taken from alleged victims and third parties.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult comes to notice as having suffered abuse in the past, church officers will notify the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and appropriate authorities to ensure that the matter is on record. Support will be offered to adult survivors of child abuse, who will also be encouraged to make a statement to the Police if they have not done so before.

We will seek to offer informed pastoral care and support to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry that recognises the importance of understanding the needs of those who have been abused, including their feelings of alienation and / or isolation. We recognise that anyone can be a victim of abuse in any setting, including in their own home, and in a church environment, and will work hard to make our church a safe place for people to disclose any concerns they have and receive appropriate support. We will seek to protect survivors of abuse from the possibility of further harm and abuse.

We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust and responsibility, where they are trusted by others.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision, and referral to the appropriate authorities, to any member of our Church community known to have offended against a child, young person or adult who is vulnerable. We will support them in continuing to attend church services whilst supervising their attendance to reduce the risk of further harm.

Safer Recruitment and DBS checks

We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility for children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church in line with safer recruitment principles, including taking up references and the use of criminal records checks.

The suitability of an applicant or nominated volunteer for work with children, young people or vulnerable adult should not be solely dependent upon Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) disclosures and vetting checks. Someone whose DBS disclosure is clear may still be

unsuitable. Hence the need for an interview and references to assure ourselves, as far as we can, that someone is suitable.

As part of the Safer Recruitment process, it is the policy of this Benefice that:

- All those who regularly work with children, young people and vulnerable adults including those who work on a rota, should have enhanced DBS checks if they reach the criteria;
- Those who work only occasionally will be asked to apply for a DBS check if they reach the criteria;
- Those who manage or supervise people who work with vulnerable groups will be required to be DBS plus Barred List checked if they reach the criteria.

We will comply with the policy and guidance for the time being of the House of Bishops and the Diocese as to the taking up of the appropriate level of DBS checks for all persons who may be eligible for such checks. If there is any doubt as to whether a DBS check should be made advice will be taken from the Diocesan Safeguarding Department.

Safeguarding Training

We will comply with the policy and guidance for the time being of the House of Bishops and the Diocese as to the need for Safeguarding Training at the various levels known as C0, C1, C2 and C3. We regard such Training as being an essential aspect of our commitment to providing a safe and accountable framework within which work with children, young people and vulnerable adults can take place.

Safeguarding Person and Reporting of Concerns

The Safeguarding Person for the benefice is Dr Rob Sage. His role is to work with the Rector, Group Council and individual PCCs to implement policy and procedures and to ensure that any concerns are appropriately reported. In the first instance, advice is normally taken from the Diocesan Safeguarding Department. However, in serious or urgent cases contact may be made direct with the relevant statutory authorities.

It is anticipated that a successor Safeguarding Person will be appointed later this year. This appointment will be made in accordance with Safer Recruitment Policy as advised by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. Following the appointment of a successor it is possible that Rob will continue to assist in relation to administrative aspects of safeguarding though this is yet to be decided.

Details of churchwardens

Within each parish, the churchwardens are the church officers with particular responsibility for keeping the congregation safe. The notices and posters on the church noticeboards give contact details of the churchwardens for anyone wishing an initial point to report a safeguarding concern.

The names of our churchwardens for the year 2021/22 are:-

Blackford	Chris Akroyd and Michael Parry
Bratton Seymour	Debbie Garrett
Compton Pauncefoot	Heather Beadles
Holton	Mark and Carol Seymour
Maperton	Olivia Scott
North Cadbury (including Galhampton)	Caroline Joneleit-Hope
North Cheriton	Susan Fitzmaurice
South Cadbury	Jane Jones and Leni Van Klaveren
Yarlington	Lesley Gillingham

Working together as a multi parish benefice

As a multi parish benefice the Diocesan guidelines encourage working together to implement the Safeguarding policy and procedures. To this end, the individual parishes have appointed a single Safeguarding Person to act as their lead person. Also, there may be instances where the overall supervision and management of the work relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults is to be undertaken by Group Council on behalf of the individual parishes.

The Group Council for the Camelot Parishes consists of churchwardens of the constituent parishes together with other authorised PCC representatives. Its role is to discuss and consult on matters of common concern presented either by clergy or by PCCs of the Camelot Parishes. It may make recommendations to the PCCs for their consideration, observation, support or compliance.

In practice, the Group Council's supervisory and management function in relation to children, young people and vulnerable adults is discharged by:-

- (a) regular and detailed reporting of activities relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults by the Rector to the Group Council with input as appropriate from Assistant Priests, the Benefice Safeguarding Person and others
- (b) the capacity for a co-opted representative for children's work to be on Group Council
- (c) the Safeguarding Person having the right to attend Group Council at all times and actually attending when the need arises
- (d) a separate standing item for Safeguarding on the Agenda of Group Council where all relevant matters are reported.

As a supervisory body, it is necessary for there to be at least three members of the Group Council (including the Safeguarding Person) who have DBS checks. At present, DBS checks have been completed for at least this number of members of Group Council. Clergy on the Group Council also have DBS checks.

At the same time, the Diocesan Guidelines recognise that there are specific legal matters where responsibility rests with individual parishes. These include:-

(a) for insurance purposes ensuring that individual PCCs are informed of Group activities which involve children, young people and vulnerable adults and which are to take place in their parish and also of the relevant Safeguarding measures in place for those activities.

(b) churchwardens of a parish may need confidentially to be informed of an individual who poses a risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults and to act in a supervisory or monitoring capacity in this respect. In these circumstances, a confidential self-declaration form followed by a DBS check would be required of the churchwardens concerned.

(c) activities which are sponsored and approved by individual PCCs rather than by the Group as a whole. At present, these include the Mainly Music initiative at North Cadbury for very young children and their parents. In this case, as mentioned previously, DBS checks are required in respect of individual churchwardens (or if there are less than two then in respect of other appropriate leading members of the PCC).

Examples of initiatives sponsored and approved by individual parishes might be a youth group or a luncheon club (which would involve vulnerable adults). These are intended as examples only, not as an exhaustive list.

However, the holding of a Family Service or an event sponsored and approved by the Group Council as a whole does not fall into this category.

The proceedings of Group Council are reported back to individual PCCs by the Group Council Representatives. There will be a separate Safeguarding item on each PCC Agenda and normally this will be fulfilled through the reporting of the content of the Safeguarding item from the last Group Council. There needs to be a specific person on each PCC who is responsible for ensuring that appropriate liaison is maintained with the Safeguarding Person so that any matters of concern are reported back to individual PCCs.

If any Safeguarding matter arises during the year which specifically concerns an individual PCC the normal procedure is that this will be reported and discussed at the next available PCC meeting.

At the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, the Rector will review and report on Safeguarding matters for the year.

Risk Assessments

Risk Assessments are to be completed by all churches of the Camelot Parishes for all events and activities including those which may involve children and vulnerable adults.



Publicity

The Church of England has now produced and circulated to churchwardens posters which give detailed information for various safeguarding contacts including the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, the Local Authority Social Services and the Police. This poster (or a notice giving the equivalent contact details and information) is now to be displayed on church noticeboards and on a portable board for any church event involving children which is held on non-church premises.

The Camelot Parishes website now also gives details of safeguarding contacts on its home page and (in more detail) on its linked policy page. Each parish page has a note referring to the safeguarding information provided on the homepage. The A Church Near You website gives similar details.

Ratification

The amendments to this updated Policy have been discussed and ratified by Group Council. Individual PCCs will then need formally to propose and adopt the amendments to this updated Policy.

Review

This updated Policy will be reviewed (and amended if necessary) at the annual Group Council meeting in May. Any further amendments will likewise be presented to the individual PCCs for their adoption.

Dated: *William Aul Smith, Rector*

Signed: *23rd June 2022*