

Annual Safeguarding Report for St Mary's Shortlands
Annual Parochial Church Meeting
to be held on 29th March 2020

2019 was a busy but successful year. The findings of the 2019 Safeguarding Audit which all parishes were required to complete are still being analysed and responses to the many questions that were submitted will be published in 2020. *'Overall the audit was well received and acted as a useful checklist for parishes. The exercise showed that the vast majority of parishes had embraced safeguarding and were working hard to achieve all of the requirements from the House of Bishops. It was evident that there were many examples of good practice as well as a real commitment to make our churches a safe place'*.

Completing our Audit enabled me to draft a Safeguarding Action Plan which has resulted in new policies on Safer Recruitment, Bullying and Harassment and Whistleblowing being written and approved by the PCC. I am also intending to start a Network of Parish Safeguarding Officers in the Beckenham Deanery.

All PCC trustees have current DBS checks and have completed the minimum Safeguarding training with a few completing the next level. Similarly all Junior Church Leaders and Helpers have current DBS certificates and have completed the required Safeguarding training. Rev Gary and I attended 'Becoming Aware of Domestic Abuse' training in October.

All members of the PCC have received a Parish Safeguarding Handbook together with a pocket leaflet, copies of which are available from the table at the back of church. The Parish Safeguarding Handbook has been updated to reflect the amendments to pages 16 and 17. There is now new guidance from the Church of England's National Safeguarding Team which will sit alongside the Parish Safeguarding Handbook. It includes the new *Safer Environment and Activities Practice Guidance*, and *The Code of Safer Working Practice*.

The PCC have formally adopted the House of Bishops 'Promoting a Safer Church' safeguarding policy statement. This can be seen on the Safeguarding noticeboard.

The Practice Guidance for Safeguarding Training and Development has been revised with the Basic Awareness and Foundation training module (a pre-requisite for any other training) still being accessed online via the safeguarding training portal at <https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org>. It is planned to introduce online modules on Domestic Abuse and Safer Recruitment soon. If you wish further details please speak to me.

There is now a new DBS Confidential Declaration form (CDF) that has been updated in line with the Safer Recruitment Guidance and GDPR and has been approved by the Bishops National Safeguarding Steering Group.

The Diocesan Safeguarding and the Children and Young People's Teams have received an increasing number of enquiries asking for guidance around communicating with young people online and through social media. There is now a guidance document available, ('Online Communication with Young People 2019'), to help with this increasingly important area of communication. You can find this in the 'Guidance - Children' section of the diocesan web pages.

The Wednesday Communion held on 16th October focussed on Modern Day Slavery. This was received with interest and led to some discussion. Thanks to Debbie Speller for her help with this. Following on from this the Lily foundation became our January 2020 Mission of the Month.

November 25th was International White Ribbon Day, part of a global movement to end male violence against women. David Jefferies highlighted this and the whole issue of domestic abuse against men and women in his address and Rev Gary elaborated further. Thanks to Cecilia Willatt for her white ribbon arrangements.

Janice Keen has now retired as Bishop's Adviser for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults. Greg Barry is now managing the team as Lead Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, he continues to also work as the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer. Greg will continue to be responsible for training in addition to undertaking case work and policy. Claire Langridge has joined the team as Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and leads on DBS, safer recruitment, safer working practices, spiritual abuse and the supervision of offenders who attend our churches. An advert for a second DSA has just been posted (Jan 30th 2020)

DBS checks now have to be completed every 5 years and three are due for renewal later this year. I will contact those concerned nearer the time.

I would like to thank Rev Gary and the PCC for their continuing support with all safeguarding matters.

Kay Coleman
Parish Safeguarding Officer and Lead Recruiter
February 3rd 2020