

Inspiring people, churches and schools across our diocese.



Pizza and Praise

"Everyone loves pizza" enthused curate, Revd Paul Roberts, as he unpacked the homemade pizza dough, cheese and tomato paste in the village hall kitchen, "we make them together and then while they're in the oven we discuss a topic or look at a bible story and draw out some questions they might have about it."

He's busy preparing for the start of this week's Pizza Club run by Bartestree Cross Group of Parishes, which sprang out of a need for young people after confirmation to continue their Christian faith journey.



Running for 18 months, it began in the living room of Revd Paul's house but soon outgrew it and now takes place,

once a month in Preston Wynne village hall.

Paul continues: "Obviously confirmation classes can be quite formal as there's a certain amount of information you want to convey whereas this is a much more relaxed atmosphere which really helps us to touch on questions about faith in a more spontaneous way.

"Thinking about how the generations work together giving our young people some time where they can make friendships and talk about their faith in a safe and relaxed atmosphere, that really helps to bring them into the wide family of the church."

Cont. Page 2

Featuring:

Growing stories:

When church goes to school

How weddings are just the start

Looking ahead to:

Christmas -your opportunity to be at the heart of your community

Plus...

A new approach to giving



Bishop Richard Inspiring each generation...

Welcome to the first edition of our new magazine Inspire!

Its very title is at the heart of what we're doing together proclaiming Christ in lives led by the Holy Spirit.

We have the highest percentage church attendance in the Church of England. Thank you for all you do each day to encourage each other and to welcome people into our church communities.

People often look to the Church of England for support at life's big moments, such as the birth of a child and christening. Many of our parishes already have strong relationships with such families, showing how a baby's baptism can be the start of a relationship with Christ for all involved. We have the opportunity to share in this just as people were drawn to the birth and welcoming of Jesus at Christmas.

I would also like to add my thanks for the increased giving seen in parish offers, which can turn round our financial situation. There is still much to do, but there are encouraging signs.

Thank you for your generosity as we serve in Christ's name together.

With warm Christmas greetings,

Richard

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Pizza and Praise

Eating together is also important Paul explained: "When we look at the bible, we see Jesus doing a lot of teaching in informal settings, but he would also take his disciples and break bread with them. To come together, to eat together and learn together is a really fun way to teach our young people about Jesus."

"Pizza club is a great example of a way we can keep our young people interested and grow them spiritually and also help to grow the church numerically."

So what do the young people say?



"We don't just learn about Jesus, we also learn about each other"

However, it's not just for young people, parents say the club has encouraged them to attend church.

One mother described the change it has brought about in her daughters: *"It's the highlight of the month for them. It's been really lovely to see how much they've grown spiritually The whole process is very enveloping and it's very much part of their life now."*



Initially drawn from confirmation classes the pizza club is open to all young people in the benefice with 12 or more attending each month.

Growing an Intergenerational Church

Last year together as a diocese through Follow! conversations and Inspire! events we asked: "What do we hear God calling us to be and to do as Christians, churches, parishes, benefices, deaneries, together across the diocese. We heard:

"I long for: 'my children and grandchildren to grow up knowing God's love'... 'our church to be made up of people of all ages and backgrounds'... 'to be one body sharing and working together across the diocese, making a difference wherever we are in lives and communities'"

Clear areas of focus emerged: Inspiring prayer; Inspiring all ages; Inspiring churches; Inspiring schools; Inspiring communities; Inspiring sacred spaces and church buildings; Inspiring generosity. This year we're seeing encouraging signs of action across our diocese through little steps, one degree shifts, and breaking new ground in all of these.

The Church Commissioners believe in what we're trying to do, making a first grant of £500,000 towards bigger, bolder action through the recruitment of "Intergenerational Missioners" based locally across the diocese. We've appointed four people to these roles with two more on the way.

In the coming year our hope is that Inspire! will be a place where we can all share, learn and grow together, encourage and inspire one another. Join the conversation! Share the journey!



Life Events

Growing all ages

In a series of articles over the coming months in Inspire! we are going to explore how your church can connect with locals and visitors at important times in their lives and encourage them to take steps on lifelong journeys of discovery with God.

Last year 1,170 children and adults were baptised in our diocese! With an average of 50 people at each baptism that gave us over 50,000 contacts - an incredible opportunity to connect with families and guests, sharing the meaning of baptism and why it's just the beginning of an amazing journey...

The life events of christenings, weddings and funerals give extraordinary opportunities for churches. Weddings are one of the great moments we have as a church to minister to

people at a special time in their lives, and make lasting connections. Last year there were over 600 weddings at churches in our diocese connecting our churches with more than 30,000 people.

The Church of England is still the country's biggest provider of funerals. We took nearly 2000 in our diocese last year.

This gave us many opportunities to meet needs and share the good news of hope in Jesus Christ at one of life's most difficult moments.

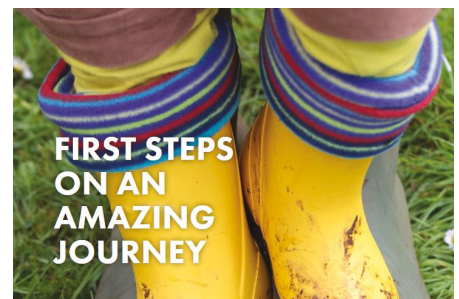
Life Events resources for your church

Three very helpful and accessible Church of England websites are available for people wanting to find out more about Christenings, Weddings and Funerals and next steps after them.

www.churchofenglandchristenings.org, www.yourchurchwedding.org
www.churchofenglandfunerals.org

Online Life Events resources for parishes to help you build on Life Events at:

www.churchsupporthub.org and buy resources from www.churchprinthub.org



How your church can grow Christians of all ages through Life Events - Christenings

Open to all.

Specially organised for parishes, benefices and deaneries that want to build on Life Events in their Mission Action Plan.

This will be an inspiring day led by Canon Dr Sandra Millar, Head of Life Events, Church of England.



Tuesday 5 December 2017
10am - 4pm

Venue: Green Lane Methodist Church, Leominster

Bookings: Jane Pearce in Mission Support at the Ludlow Office on 01584 871086 grow@hereford.anglican.org. Queries to Caroline Pascoe.

Life Events: How to...

If you are wondering how your church can grow through life events or how to get started, our Diocesan Life Events Support Team is here to help.

The team is made up of clergy and lay leaders who have successfully been building on Life Events in their parishes.

Team members can come to your deanery, benefice or parish to introduce how you can reach out and grow all ages through Life Events; how you can use the excellent new Church of England Life Events online resources and materials, and to help you plan your next steps.

Contact Caroline Pascoe who will put you in touch with a team member near you. t: 01584 871086 or email c.pascoe@hereford.anglican.org

Why weddings matter...

Many couples explore what is important to them and what will shape their lives together when they prepare to get married. A growing number of churches in our diocese are helping them do this and some take steps in faith.

Here's one example.



Growing together

Weddings - a wonderful opportunity

So often these days the wedding reception gets picked first. Six years ago, a local wedding venue was in its early days of starting up in our parish and there was one couple who lived in Reading. They came to have a look at St Mary's Burghill and fell in love with it. Of course they then had to come once a month for at least six months and they really became part our community.

It may not be that all of these such wedding couples turn into regular attenders but we often see them for Christmas and they bring their children for christenings.

It's lovely marrying local girls and boys but often their relationship with the church is one of proximity whereas wedding couples travelling from afar have specifically chosen us for their most special day. They may not have been churchgoers before but they hear the word of God as part of the wedding service. They also get to know Christian people so even if we don't see them again we've started them on their own journey with God and they may go on to build a relationship with their local church.

Our congregations just love welcoming people and I won't turn away anyone who turns to Christ. I love the idea that we're a church where people want to come for whatever reason.

Revd Penny Littlewood is retiring Priest-in-Charge at St Mary's Burghill, Hereford and is becoming a member of our diocesan Life Events Support Team.

Statistics for Mission encouragements

Worshipping community:

2015: 11,700

2016: 12,800



All age attendance:

2015: 9,600

2016: 9,900



Children attending a Church of England school/academy:

11,850



Source: Statistics for Mission 2016 (Published October 2017)

Over 60 Open the Book teams across our diocese are telling bible stories in assemblies at local schools. Through Open the Book together we are reaching more than 6000 children



Open the book together

The Open the Book team in Stottesdon, Shropshire is ecumenical. Priest-in-charge, Revd Mark Daborn described it as a really good example of doing church differently.

"Having effectively missed out on one generation or two, this is a chance for children to get a good solid knowledge of the bible in their primary years.

"I'm sometimes asked if this is leading to getting more children to come to church on Sunday but what we're doing is responding to a need for the church to go into schools, and helping children to learn about the Christian faith"

The Bible Society scheme involves volunteers dressing up, acting, or using puppets to illustrate stories from the Bible. The dramatization is usually followed by a reflection and prayer.

Children can also join in with acting and telling the stories involving Christian values and the themes are often used by teachers in other lessons.

Open the Book is not just about learning the bible - the children get to know local people who go to church and have a living faith.

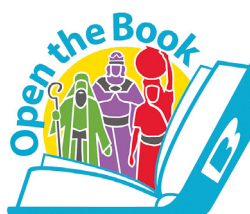
Mark continues: "The children can ask questions and have discussions with the team in an environment which they are familiar with.

I think for so long we've expected people to come to us and the church needs to go where people are and this is one of the most important ways of doing this.

I would say if anyone hasn't got Open the Book running in their school then they need to get on and do it."

Do you know? Open the book facts...

- We are growing a generation of children who have a better knowledge of Bible stories than their parents
- You don't need special skills or acting ability to be an Open the Book storyteller.
- The main reason why people continue to be Open the Book storytellers is "because we love it!"
- Our newest Open the Book Team is starting this autumn at Bodenham Primary School
- Open the Book has a new resource linking Bible Stories with School Values



How can you start Open the Book?

Find out more about Open The Book at: www.openthebook.net

Kathy Bland (our Diocesan Intergenerational Church Enabler) can help you set up an Open the Book Team or link you up with other Open the Book teams in our diocese.

Contact Kathy on k.bland@hereford.anglican.org



Carol singers

find plenty of room at the inn

Considering taking your carol service somewhere new?

Last year more than 60 people attended carols at the pub in Peterstow. In its second year the event at the Yew Tree Inn attracted so many people that they're now having to hold it in the pub's barn.

One of the organisers, Barbara Grattan said "We're pulling in lots of people that wouldn't ordinarily come to a carol service in the church."

The service, which features carols and readings, always ends with the traditional Christmas passage from Luke of when the shepherds arrive.

The Yew Tree Inn, whose owners are not regular churchgoers, provide mince pies and mulled wine/cider making it a church led social occasion as well as collective community worship.

"This is about taking the church out into the community.

"It is about breaking down invisible barriers.

"We get people from all age groups and people who bring their children along as well and it really feels like we are developing our own village tradition." said Barbara.

Seasonal events like this are a great opportunity for the church to make and build on local connections.

Why not hand out details of your other Christmas all-age services and events coming up to people attending?



Resources for carols in the pub, on the green, in church...



The Bible Society and HOPE have teamed up to help you easily run carol events in your local pub, on the village green, in residential homes, community centres, schools, and even in church! They have published attractive specially designed free carol booklets. If you don't have any musicians, there's also a music track App to accompany the carols!

Matching, low cost, high quality publicity materials can be overprinted with your details for a small charge.

Plus orders of service, plays, activities and more. Easy, joyful, inspiring!

www.hopetogether.org.uk

www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/christmas/



Special delivery from the church

In Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire they've decided to drop tealights and service times around the village.



Revd Mark Johnson explains: "We're doing the letterbox drop to raise the profile of the church and to remind people that even if they don't come to church we are here."

"It's also a way of letting people know that we're praying for them even if we don't know them."

There are just over a hundred houses in Much Dewchurch so PCC members are sharing the round between them and the first run will contain Advent and Christmas service times.

If successful, they hope to continue to do this for each of the major festivals, Lent, Easter and Harvest.

New Christmas film



The Bible Society's Christmas film, **The Greatest Journey**, is out. Telling the story of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, the film features all the characters you'd expect to find in the Christmas story - and some you wouldn't!

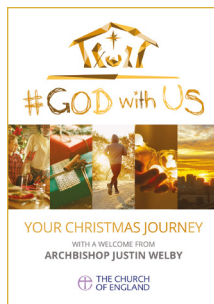
It's perfect for children aged three and upwards but we're sure it'll be enjoyed by the whole family. So sit back, relax - and watch out for that sheep poo...

God With Us: Your Christmas Journey



December can be a time of year when moments of peace and quiet reflection are in short supply.

This attractive booklet is part of the Church of England **#GodWithUs** campaign. It's designed to help readers make the most of quiet moments whenever they can.



There's a short reflection for each day from Christmas Eve to New Year's Day, as well as one each for the four weeks of Advent to help readers explore the message of so many Christmas readings and carols - that God is with us.

Each reflection is accompanied by a picture, a challenge and a short Bible reading to help make connections between the Christmas story and life, and take the next step on a journey of discovery.

Special price £1 a copy from Mission Support in the Ludlow Office. Alternatively order single booklets at £1.50 or packs of 10 for £12.50 from Church House Publishing.

a church
NEAR YOU



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

The new A Church Near You website is now live.

For help and advice email: comms@hereford.anglican.org



Winter Shelter

reminds us 'everyone is precious to God'

It springs up in an unlikely location - a few higgledy-piggledy rooms at the back of St Peter's church in Hereford city centre, where rows of camp beds, clean clothes and sleeping bags are stacked up – but the winter shelter supports between 60 and 80 people during the coldest months.

Now in its ninth year the shelter is offering overnight accommodation this winter between 27 November and 11 March.



Run mainly by church volunteers a small number of paid night wardens also support guests overnight during their stay.

Centre co-ordinator, Andy Butterfill and his wife have been involved for the past seven years:

"Jill and I both got involved through trying to help two people who were homeless. At the same time, the then curate here was trying to get more support for people who were sleeping rough because it was predicted that winter would be particularly cold.

"By trying to help the two homeless people it gave me an understanding of the situation people can sometimes find themselves in."

The shelter can offer beds for up to 16 men and three women and provides a safe alternative to rough sleeping. Whilst there is a group of people who stay for the whole time the shelter is open, there is also a larger number of people who stay for only a short period. Support is on hand from housing officers and the Samaritans to help people make positive changes in their lives.

Andy continues: "We want to see people in this sort of need having a better life. It's not just about finding permanent accommodation but about helping people to improve their lives in a wider sense in whatever way they are able to.

"What we've found with the shelter is that when people realise we're on their side, that we value them, then we can build a relationship with them.

"We do this because everyone is precious in God's sight and we are called to proclaim that."

Some of our paid wardens come back year after year and four or five have been involved from the start. Most wardens do one or two nights a week and one volunteer is a lady in her 70s.

"We're a cog in the machine that supports people at the start of their journey back into housing but what's desperately needed is assistance to help people who are struggling, so that they stay in housing and don't become homeless and there simply isn't enough of that."

If you're interested in volunteering at St Peter's Winter Shelter or in one of the temporary night warden roles then please visit:

www.hereford.anglican.org/churchchristianjobs



If you're interested in putting your faith into action visit our website for ideas on how you can get involved:

www.hereford.anglican.org/communitylinks

SCHOOL FOR MINISTRY

RESOURCING GOD'S PEOPLE FOR MISSION

The School for Ministry is a new name for the range of learning opportunities which the diocese offers to individuals and parish groups.



Something for everyone

So there is support here for you whoever you are - for example:

- a lay worship leader
- a member of your benefice pastoral care team
- a churchwarden
- a Local Ministry Development Group member
- someone who wants to deepen their understanding of the Christian faith
- someone who wants to help others come to faith in Christ
- a Messy Church leader/helper...

The Framework for Christian Learning

- Open access: anyone may do any course
- Free / minimal cost
- Delivered as locally as possible
- Practical & non-academic
- Useful and interesting
- Can be led by local experienced facilitators

If you wish, you can work towards a Framework for Christian Learning Certificate, made up of the four Core Topics plus any two optional topics.



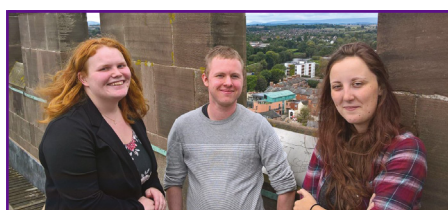
Core topics:

Spirituality: My Story
Bible: God's Story
Christian living: Living the Story
Mission: Sharing our Story

Optional topics include:

In Spirit and in Truth
 leading worship from scratch
Exploring Pastoral Care
Working Together Well
Exploring Intergenerational Ministry
Parish administration
Churchwardens' ministry

To find out more email:
j.daniels@hereford.anglican.org



Pictured left to right: Sian Mehlmann, Ethan Scott and Sam Burgoyne

Discover

We've welcomed three new interns to the 'Discover' programme in our diocese this autumn. The scheme offers young people the opportunity to experience fulltime Christian ministry for a year.



New Welcome film

We've launched our first ever Welcome to our Diocese film.
It's a snapshot of church, school and community life here.

It can be used to stimulate discussion and debate about intergenerational church, developing the Christian faith of young people, thinking about how to use a building differently or looking at social action.

Please consider sharing it on your social media channels. You can also download the film to show at your event from the Communications Resources page of our website: <https://www.hereford.anglican.org/communicationsresources/>

Communications Training update:

Sign up!

Church of England digital training day in our diocese

Date: **Wednesday 31 January 2018, 10:00-16:00**

Location: **Kingsland**

Following a session in November which was seriously oversubscribed we are now pleased to be able to offer a second free session again covering
'An introduction to social media and writing for the web'.

The training will be led by Amaris Cole, Digital Content and Communications Manager for the Church of England.

Email: comms@hereford.anglican.org to register your interest.

Monthly Diocesan e-Bulletin.

Are you among the over 1,300 people who receive our monthly mailing?

It's packed full of information about church life in the diocese, news of diocesan events and offers an easy way for you to be regularly updated on all of what's happening.

You can sign up from the home page of our website: www.hereford.anglican.org

New buildings guide for parishes



A new, updated and extended version of *'Crossing the Threshold: a step by step guide to developing your place of worship for wider community use and managing a successful building project'* toolkit has been launched.

It draws upon the impact many parishes in the diocese have seen from simple improvements.

Community Partnership and Funding Officer, Wendy Coombey said: "We've included more guidance in response to requests from parishes, on subjects including how to work with architects, or how to be more thoughtful about the environment.

The toolkit can be downloaded from the diocesan website. www.hereford.anglican.org

Our diocese is on Facebook, Twitter and now on Instagram – are you following us?



[hereforddiocese](https://www.facebook.com/hereforddiocese)



[@hereforddiocese](https://twitter.com/hereforddiocese)



[hereforddiocese](https://www.instagram.com/hereforddiocese)

21st Century Giving...

has arrived in the Diocese of Hereford and will be coming to a church near you soon!

The Diocese of Hereford formally joined the Parish Giving Scheme following a decision in July; in an early 'pilot' phase parishes have been joining since the beginning of September.

The scheme offers givers a better way to give to their local church, and has been hugely successful in other dioceses of the Church of England.

Features of the Direct Debit based scheme include Gift Aid reclaim (where applicable), an option to automatically increase giving annually, in line with inflation, an annual thank-you letter to givers, and options to give monthly, quarterly, or annually. All giving is processed electronically, minimising the counting of cash collections and the requirement to bank large sums of money on a weekly basis.

Already, within the diocese, the growth of the scheme has exceeded all expectations. Cradley and Weobley churches became the very first to sign up (on the very same evening!) and others have followed quickly at Greater Whitbourne, Tupsley, Kingsland, Aymestry with Leinthall Earls, Highley, Chelmarsh, Glazeley and Colwall. Other parishes are in the process of joining; from every deanery across the diocese.

Richard Jones, Parish Giving Adviser, said:

"We are thrilled with the response from parishes to the new Parish Giving Scheme. It has a proven ability to transform the giving and finances of any church and is a key part of our support to parishes in this diocese".

Sam Pratley, Diocesan Secretary added *"The way people give is changing and through the introduction of the Parish Giving Scheme into this diocese, it's great to see that giving to the local church is changing too. I'm excited by the*

potential the Parish Giving Scheme offers, both to our churches and to their givers. I urge you and your church to get involved".



Weobley Church: Givers here became the very first in the diocese to join the Parish Giving Scheme and to donate to their local church

For more information on the Parish Giving Scheme or to invite either of our Parish Giving Advisers to come and talk to your PCC or congregation.

Contact:

Ludlow Archdeaconry

Val Smith 07887 245040

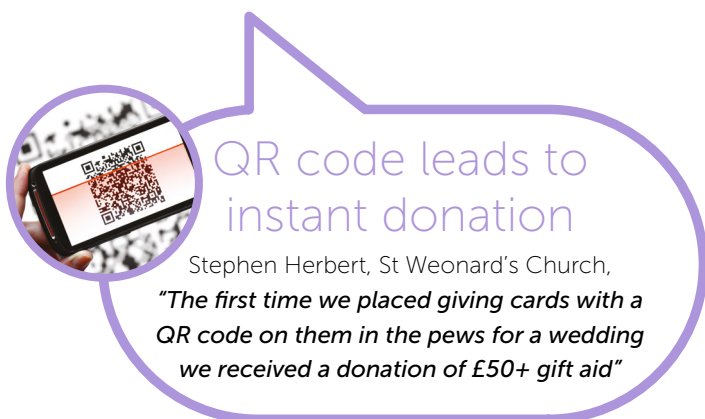
val.smith@hereford.anglican.org

or Hereford Archdeaconry

Richard Jones 01432 373344

richardjones@hereford.anglican.org or

visit www.parishgivingscheme.org.uk



QR Code giving. How to...

Every church has a QR code already set up on the national church finder website: A Church Near You.

This QR code can then be used to direct people to a page on a church website where details on how to give can be listed.

Archdeacon retires



Paddy Benson, the Archdeacon of Hereford will be leaving at the end of August 2018.

Paddy came to Hereford in 2011 and has been an active contributor to our partnership with Tanzania.

The Bishop of Hereford, the Rt Revd Richard Frith said:
"All of us have reason to be thankful to Paddy for his ministry. He is passionate about the Christian good news, warmly pastoral in his dealings with others, immensely hardworking and a very gifted communicator of the Christian faith. We wish Paddy well in his retirement."

Diocesan Synod motion on same sex prayers

Our Diocesan Synod has voted in favour of asking the House of Bishops to commend an order of Prayer and Dedication after the registration of a civil partnership or same sex marriage.

The motion came from three deanery synods, (Kington and Weobley, Leominster and Ross and Archenfield).

The motion was passed by Diocesan Synod on Thursday 19 October with 41 people voting in favour, 18 against and 4 abstaining.



Diocesan Safeguarding update

The diocese underwent an Independent Safeguarding Audit in May, which was part of a national programme of diocesan audits commissioned by the Archbishop's Council.

The review conducted by the Social Care Institute for Excellence scrutinised diocesan records and included interviews with key diocesan staff and with a focus group of parish representatives.

Thank you to those parish volunteers who gave up time to be part of this process.

Financial update

Our financial situation as a diocese remains tough, although it's an improving picture. For 2018, we are forecasting a budget deficit of £445,000, a welcome reduction from the original budget deficit of £750,000 for 2017.

We have come a long way with considerable savings through disciplined budgeting, with posts closed and hours reduced in Diocesan offices, as well as temporary reductions in improvements to parsonage housing. A few individual deaneries and benefices have also seen clergy roles reduced, with the decision made and communicated at a local level and dependent on the ministry needs of these particular areas.

As the Diocese continues to pursue our sources of income, we pray that every parish will choose to play its part by contributing to the Common Fund as generously as it can through their Parish Offer, so that together we will be able to deliver on our mission and ministry priorities across all our local communities.

Many individuals and PCCs have been wonderfully generous, and we are very grateful for this commitment. However, we need to acknowledge that the overall picture across all our parishes is that contributions have stagnated at a total of around £3.8m for the last six years. We must find another £0.5m every year if we are to meet the costs of parish ministry in the years ahead.

New Church of England Portal

Our diocese has signed up to the Church of England Portal which provides access to all Church of England services.

Users need to register but will then have access to all of the national internal websites under one login.

These include; *Contact Management – the Hereford Diocese Database, Parish Buying, A Church Near You, Parish Resources, Church Support Hub, Church Print Hub, Pastoral Services Diary and Church Care.*

You can login at: <https://cofeportal.org/login>

Safeguarding Training

Attendance at Safeguarding Training is mandatory for anyone performing certain roles connected with Church work.

It's also expected you refresh your training on a three yearly basis. Please make every effort to attend.

Book a space on a Safeguarding Training Course with Cheryl Combstock 01432 373317.