

## A safer church for all

**H**ow can we build a safer church for all together? In Bath and Wells, safeguarding children and adults who may be vulnerable to abuse or harm is a priority. We have a network of safeguarding officers in churches across the diocese. They are supported by a team of safeguarding professionals, who have experience in the probation, police and prison services.

Along with the rest of the Church of England, a comprehensive, independent review of past safeguarding cases was undertaken in Bath and Wells in 2020. The Church of England will be publishing the results of the review soon and alongside that we will be



sharing our action plan to address those areas highlighted in the report as needing improvement.

Bishop Ruth says, "I am deeply grateful and humbled by all survivors who have stepped forward to expose the failings of the past. Their bravery has allowed us to make the improvements in our procedures and behaviours that we have made - and continue

to make, but we know there is no place for complacency."

Everyone involved in church life should know what to do in situations where a child, young person or vulnerable adult may have been harmed. Each parish or benefice should have in place a safeguarding person who knows how to respond and where to seek further help and advice.

Anyone who wishes to report abuse or exploitation needs to know that they can do so and receive the support they need.

Find out more about Safeguarding in Bath and Wells at [bathandwells.org.uk/safeguarding](https://bathandwells.org.uk/safeguarding), including training and how to report a safeguarding concern ■

## News in brief

### The power of art

In collaboration with local artist Sami Green, St John's church in Highbridge is hosting an art installation, The Transformation Project. In a bid to bring people together after Covid, community groups from the area created hundreds of origami butterflies made from recycled vintage newspaper which were then hung from the church rafters. Local women's groups, Churchfield school, and Highbridge Guides and Brownies are just some of those who got involved ■



Celebrating tree planting

### School gets busy outdoors

Not only has St Margaret's Primary School, Tintinhull completed an outdoor space for the children and local community, they've won a prestigious Gold Award from the Woodland Trust and planted more than 30 trees, each with a plaque dedicated to a person or group in the community. They've received a letter of commendation from Her Majesty the Queen for their efforts ■



### New chaplaincy team for the courts

A new chaplaincy team has begun in Taunton serving staff and users at the magistrates' court. Michael Hayes, courts team convenor, says, "We have been given a warm welcome and already had several significant encounters. A lot of waiting happens at the courthouse and people can be anxious and bewildered; friendly reassurance is valued."

The five-person team (with two reserves) works on a fortnightly basis with plans to move to weekly on Thursdays ■

# Life in abundance

By Brian Castle, Honorary Assistant Bishop for Bath & Wells

**I**t all happened so quickly. I went to A&E with severe back-pain which affected my mobility. The NHS was outstanding. Within a dizzying few hours, I heard I would need an immediate MRI scan and possibly rods to support my spine. I dreaded the thought of going into the scanner, let alone the surgery. As I was being wheeled along the corridor, Lauren, my Godson's 10-year-old daughter, came into my mind.

Lauren is a talented girl passionate about football. Just over a year ago, it was discovered that she had a growth at the base of the spine which would need radical treatment to prevent spinal curvature. She would also require

rods in her back which could be regularly extended by surgery as she grew into adulthood. In addition, this ten-year-old would be spending lonely hours in a soul-less scanner. Lauren is lovingly supported by her wonderful family and magnificently treated by NHS professionals, but while it can be shared, the load is ultimately hers to carry. Parents bear the agony of powerlessness. In the middle of this painful dilemma, young Lauren is instinctively grabbing the God-given gift of abundant life which is for all and which lies at the heart of the Gospel. As we get older, less passionate and more cynical we can lose faith in this gift.

As I was being taken to the radiology department, I realised

that I was being strengthened and inspired by this young girl, six decades my junior, facing far greater challenges than me. My own fears were being transformed by Jesus Christ's gift of life mediated through Lauren's courage. Life may turn out differently from what we expect, but that does not restrict its abundance.

The young are an inspiration. It is the role of the older generation to ensure they can grow into the special people God has created them to be so that they can release the gifts they have for us all.

Thanks, Lauren.

Despite all she faces, Lauren continues to play football.



## A breadth of experience

Our new Safeguarding Manager, Ben Goodhind, shares his thoughts on how safeguarding is supported across Bath and Wells.

### How does your probation service background help in your role?

Many people don't realise that the Probation Service was founded by Church of England court missionaries in 1907, so unsurprisingly, it helps a great deal. Not only have I managed, and risk assessed many who may seek to cause harm, but I have also supported thousands of people in making significant changes to stay safe and move on a different path.

### What has surprised you most?

My biggest surprise was just how good a safeguarding team we have. By this I mean the hundreds of voluntary Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) from backgrounds



Ben Goodhind, Safeguarding Manager

including education, nursing, criminal justice and law and also the professionalism of my own team. Their breadth of experience in the police, probation, prison and social work would be the envy of many statutory teams.

### How important are our Parish Safeguarding Officers?

They are the key to everything we

do as a safeguarding team and as such I have made supporting them the key priority. I have so much respect for them and the fact they choose to give their time freely to protect others.

### How can we all play our part in becoming a safer church?

By viewing safeguarding as a part of our faith and, when things don't look right, always challenge them. Educating ourselves on safeguarding with training is vital and keeping up to date with wider topics in the media is also very helpful.

Read the full interview at:

[bathandwells.org.uk/a-breadth-of-experience](https://bathandwells.org.uk/a-breadth-of-experience)

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