

St Bartholomew's Church.
Safeguarding Update. March 2021.

The PCC has recently submitted its responses to the annual "Archdeacons' Articles of Enquiry", which this year, focused solely on safeguarding. Part of this work has involved the PCC meeting over 'zoom' to discuss how we can ensure our parishioners and our community feel safe in church. To do this, we reflected on two local case studies reviewing the lessons learned concerning the abuse of the elderly and spiritual abuse (where a faith leader misuses their position to create a toxic culture within the church or group by controlling members). We asked ourselves, what we could learn and where we need to change our behaviour?

Part of our response was a discussion around raising awareness and information sharing. We do this on our website and in our church, but felt it would be helpful to remind you of some of the key information related to safeguarding.

1. Consult our safeguarding policy. This is reviewed annually in May and is on the website.
2. Consult the safeguarding information that is in church. There are names of contacts to help you. There is always somebody to talk to.
3. All clergy and volunteers should be appointed using safer recruitment practices. Our church has systems in place to do this.
4. All clergy and volunteers have undergone the appropriate safeguarding training as is commensurate with their different roles. The training schedule is maintained by the safeguarding officer so that we can ensure training is up-to-date.
5. If somebody discloses something to you then please listen to them and write down accurately what is said. Never promise confidentiality. The disclosure will need to be shared with the safeguarding officer.
6. As a closing thought we were reminded by one of our members that if we can be kind to each other we will have a happier church. We all need to help in creating an environment where we can have honest conversations. Inclusivity is the key to a safer church.

Please remember that we all have a part to play and can do more to help us become a safer church.

Sarah Varnom
Safeguarding Officer.