

## Document Control Information

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# St Bartholomew's Church Ducklington

## St. Bartholomew's, Ducklington Pastoral Policy

### **1. Purpose**

This policy outlines the pastoral care and home visiting arrangements for St Bartholomew's, Ducklington, ensuring all pastoral activity is carried out safely, compassionately, and in line with the Church of England's safeguarding standards.

It aims to:

- Promote a safe environment and culture for all pastoral activity.
- Ensure that volunteers and ministers work within safeguarding and data protection guidance.
- Provide a clear framework for responding to pastoral and safeguarding concerns.
- Maintain accountability and supervision for those offering care.

This policy applies to all clergy, licensed lay ministers, and pastoral visitors acting on behalf of the parish.

### **2. Guiding Principles**

Pastoral care in this parish is rooted in Christian service and seeks to reflect God's love, compassion, and respect for every person. We are committed to:

- Promoting a safer Church (House of Bishops, 2023).
- Respecting confidentiality within safeguarding boundaries.
- Maintaining personal and professional boundaries in all pastoral relationships.
- Supporting and supervising those who offer care.

### **3. Safeguarding Framework**

All pastoral ministry must comply with the Church of England's safeguarding policy: "Promoting a Safer Church" and the Diocesan Safeguarding Procedures.

#### **All pastoral visitors must:**

- Hold a current DBS check appropriate to their role if needed. Please see the Lone Working Policy. Not all pastoral visitors need to complete a DBS check – see the regulated activity decision making flowchart and consider the frequency criteria – more than 3 days in a 30 day period.
- Have completed the Church of England's Basic Awareness and Foundation safeguarding training modules.
- Be familiar with the Parish Safeguarding Policy and Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) contact details.
- Know how to recognise, respond, and report any safeguarding concern immediately.

If any information indicates that a person may be at risk of harm, confidentiality must not be promised. Concerns must be reported without delay to the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Rector, who will consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser if needed.

### **4. Preparing for a Pastoral Visit**

- Only initiate contact with an individual with their full knowledge and consent.
- Always make an appointment and explain the purpose of the visit.
- Visits should be planned and, where possible, conducted in pairs (ideally not husband and wife pairs).
- Never visit alone someone of the opposite sex whom you do not know well.
- Always carry ID, and let someone know where you are going and when you are expected back.
- For first visits, if there is uncertainty, two people should attend.
- You may agree to meet the person in a neutral or public location if preferred.
- All visitors must use the Pastoral Care Visit Record Form after each visit and share it confidentially with the Pastoral Lead or Rector.

## **5. During the Visit**

- Communicate with care, respect, and sensitivity.
- Pay attention to tone, posture, and cultural or personal boundaries.
- Do not enter if you feel unsafe or uncertain — your personal safety is a priority.
- If you find yourself in a difficult situation, call the Rector or PSO using the “red folder” code to discreetly indicate you need support.
- Always remain aware of exit routes and your surroundings.
- Never give or accept money or gifts.
- Keep confidentiality, but share relevant information if safeguarding concerns arise.
- Keep your mobile phone on (silent mode) and accessible.

## **6. After the Visit**

- Complete the Pastoral Care Visit Record Form as soon as possible.
- Record date, time, duration, people present, and any safeguarding or safety concerns.
- Store forms securely (digital or paper) according to the Parish Data Protection Policy.
- Any safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately to the PSO or Rector.
- Reflect on the visit — seek supervision or support if needed.

## **7. Confidentiality and Record Keeping**

All records are confidential and will be shared only with the Pastoral Lead, Rector, and PSO if necessary. Records will be stored securely in accordance with GDPR and the parish’s Data Retention Policy, and normally retained for three years unless required for longer by safeguarding or legal necessity.

## **8. Supervision and Support**

Pastoral visitors will receive:

- Regular supervision (at least annually or after complex cases).
- Ongoing safeguarding updates and pastoral training.
- Opportunities for reflection and prayer support within the team.

## **9. Boundaries of Care**

Pastoral visitors offer listening, prayer, and support but are not counsellors or professional therapists. Where a situation exceeds the parish’s capacity (e.g., serious mental health, financial crisis, or risk),

Visitors should:

- Encourage the person to seek professional help.
- Inform the Pastoral Lead or Rector.
- Request a referral or joint visit if appropriate.

### 10. Review and Accountability

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if safeguarding legislation changes. Implementation of the policy is overseen by the Rector and PCC, with safeguarding oversight provided by the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Signed Parish Priest/Incumbent..... *Andre Colburn* .....

Churchwarden ..... *P. Hye* .....

Churchwarden ..... *Walter Jones* .....

Date: ..... *15/01/26* .....