



*"where the river flows everything will live"*

# **Tidenham Parish**

## **Safeguarding Policy**

### **2025-2026**



Vicar: Vacant

Tidenham Vicarage, Gloucester Road, Tutshill, CHEPSTOW NP16 7DH

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Tidenham with Beachley and Lancut  
A Charity registered in England and Wales No. 1158940

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## Introduction

Safeguarding is widely understood to be about preventing and responding to abuse. In the Church of England, we have a broader understanding of safeguarding that also includes pastoral matters, and health and safety, meaning that it is defined as, “the action the church takes to promote a safer culture” (Promoting a Safer Church (2017), page 9). Safeguarding is, then, about looking after each other’s welfare and wellbeing. It is at the heart of our faith, as in his ministry Jesus demonstrated a special concern for children and people who were suffering.

This policy is intended to summarise and inform parishioners of our approach to safeguarding children and adults in the Parish of Tidenham. It is not possible for this policy to take the place of legal advice, or to address every possible situation that may arise. Safeguarding can be complex, and there are people whose role it is to help us to navigate it. At a parish level any safeguarding queries or concerns should be directed to the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), currently Robin Riordan. At a Diocesan level, we are guided by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors (DSAs).

In this document, a child is someone aged under 18. When we talk about safeguarding adults, we are especially thinking about adults who are vulnerable at that point in time. A vulnerable adult is defined by the Church of England as “a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired”. (The Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, Section 6) We recognise that abuse can take many forms, and includes: physical abuse, domestic violence or abuse (including children witnessing domestic abuse), sexual abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, financial or material abuse, modern slavery, discriminatory abuse, organisational or institutional abuse, neglect or acts of omission, self-neglect, digital abuse, coercive or controlling behaviour, honour based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), and spiritual abuse.

## Legal Background

The main pieces of legislation and statutory guidance that deal with safeguarding children in England are the Children Act 1989 (and 2004), Sexual Offences Act 2003 (s.22A) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023). There is also relevant non-statutory guidance especially After school clubs, community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers (2023) and Child sexual exploitation: definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation (2017) The main pieces of legislation and guidance that deal with safeguarding adults in England are the Care Act 2014, and Chapter 14 of the Care and support statutory guidance (2023). The Mental Capacity Act 2005 is also relevant. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and Equality Act 2010 are relevant to safeguarding both adults and children. As a border parish, we should be mindful that legislation and policy across the border may differ. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list.

As the PCC is a registered charity, it is regulated by the Charity Commission. The Charity Commission’s Strategy for dealing with safeguarding issues in charities states (part 3), “As part of

fulfilling their legal duties, trustees must take reasonable steps to protect from harm people who come into contact with their charity. This includes: the charity's beneficiaries, employees, volunteers and those connected with the activities of the charity. This should be a governance priority for all charities and is a fundamental part of operating as a charity for the public benefit." Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) specifies that "Every VCSE [Voluntary, Charitable or Social Enterprise], faith-based organisation and private sector organisation or agency should have policies in place to safeguard and protect children from harm. These should be followed, and systems should be in place to ensure compliance in this. Individual practitioners, whether paid or volunteer, should be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and protecting children from harm, how they should respond to child protection concerns and how to make a referral to local authority children's social care or the police, if necessary." (para 314).

More broadly, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) also states, "Anyone who has concerns about a child's welfare should consider whether a referral needs to be made to local authority children's social care and should do so immediately if there is a concern that the child is suffering significant harm or is likely to do so." (para 150). This highlights that everyone, including members of the public, has an individual responsibility to safeguard children. The process by which we fulfil this recommendation in our parish is outlined in this policy under "Responding to Concerns".

## Church of England Policy Background

In 2023, the Church of England published its five National Safeguarding Standards, which define its goals in relation to safeguarding:

"The Five Standards are:

1. **Culture, Leadership and Capacity:** Church bodies have safe and healthy cultures, effective leadership, resourcing and scrutiny arrangements necessary to deliver high-quality safeguarding practices and outcomes.
2. **Prevention:** Church bodies have in place a planned range of measures which together are effective in preventing abuse in their context.
3. **Recognising, Assessing and Managing Risk:** Risk assessments, safety plans and associated processes are of a high quality and result in positive outcomes. The assessment and management of risk is underpinned by effective partnership working.
4. **Victims and Survivors:** Victims and survivors experience the timeliness and quality of Church bodies' responses to disclosures, and their subsequent support, as positively meeting their needs, including their search for justice and helping their healing process.
5. **Learning, Supervision and Support:** All those engaged in safeguarding-related activity in Church bodies receive the type and level of learning, professional development, support and supervision necessary to respond to safeguarding situations, victims and survivors, and respondents, effectively."

The Church of England has published a number of policy documents, which will be referred to throughout this document, but are here compiled in a non-exhaustive list:

- [Promoting a Safer Church \(2017\)](#)
- [Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies Practice Guidance \(2017\)](#)
- [Managing Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations \(2024\)](#)
- [Reporting Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations \(2025\)](#)
- [Safer Environment and Activities \(2019\)](#)
- [Code of Safer Working Practice \(2021\)](#)
- [Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults \(2021\)](#)
- [Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance \(2021\)](#)
- [Responding Well To Victims and Survivors of Abuse \(2021\)](#)
- [Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework \(2024\)](#)

Many of these documents have been brought together in one handy location online, known as the [Safeguarding e-manual](#).

## Key Roles and Who's Who

- *All church members*

Should be concerned for each other's wellbeing and safety, and report any concerns to Robin Riordan the PSO on 07394 693940, or email him on [tidenhamsafeguarding@gmail.com](mailto:tidenhamsafeguarding@gmail.com) or call the vicar, when appointed, or in their absence, Associate Priest and Wellbeing Chaplain Revd Nicki Bullivant on 07936 787409.

- *All volunteers and staff*

1. Should be concerned for the wellbeing and safety of those they come into contact with in the course of their volunteering or work, and report any concerns to Robin Riordan the PSO on 07394 693940, or email him on [tidenhamsafeguarding@gmail.com](mailto:tidenhamsafeguarding@gmail.com) or call the vicar, when appointed, or in their absence, Associate Priest and Wellbeing Chaplain Revd Nicki Bullivant on 07936 787409.
2. Should follow the guidance given in the Code of Safer Working Practice (2021)
3. Should follow this policy and speak to the PSO Robin Riordan on 07394 693940 or email [tidenhamsafeguarding@gmail.com](mailto:tidenhamsafeguarding@gmail.com) if there is anything they are unsure about.
4. Should play their part in keeping their DBS check and training up to date, as prompted and supported by the Parish Safeguarding Officer (or by the Diocese, in the case of clergy and Readers/Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs)).

- *The PCC*

1. Should follow the above advice for all volunteers and staff.
2. Should fulfil their responsibility as trustees to “take reasonable steps to protect from harm people who come into contact with their charity.”
3. Should have oversight of the activities of the PSO and act on any concerns about how the role is being fulfilled.
4. Should review and vote on the Parish Safeguarding Policy each year.
  - *The Safeguarding Committee (currently Robin Riordan (PSO/Churchwarden), Revd Nicki Bullivant, and Nicholette Flatman (PCC)).*
1. Should follow the above advice for the PCC.
2. Should meet regularly to monitor compliance, discuss safeguarding concerns, and take practical steps to advance safeguarding practice in our parish.
3. Should report safeguarding activity to the PCC each month in the form: there have been no safeguarding concerns to report; or, for example, there has been one safeguarding concern which has been responded to.
  - *The Parish Safeguarding Officer (currently Robin Riordan)*
1. Should follow the guidance given in the Code of Safer Working Practice (2021)
2. Should promote safeguarding in the parish.
3. Should respond to safeguarding concerns in a timely and appropriate way.
4. Should liaise as necessary with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors and inform them promptly of safeguarding concerns.
5. Should proactively identify ways our safeguarding practices could be improved and cause these to be implemented.
6. Should ensure that safer recruitment practices are followed.
7. Should ensure that the safeguarding training of all volunteers and staff, with the exception of clergy and Readers/Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs), is kept up to date.
8. Should ensure that volunteers and staff, with the exception of clergy and Readers/Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs), have the appropriate DBS checks for their role.
9. Should maintain records and take part in auditing activities as necessary, including completion of the Parish Dashboard.
10. Should fulfil the nationally agreed role description for a PSO.

#### *Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors*

1. Receive reports of safeguarding concerns from the PSO.
2. Direct the PSO as to how to respond to and manage concerns.
3. Are a source of advice and guidance for the PSO.

## **Prevention: Safer Working Practices**

All staff and volunteers will read and follow the Code of Safer Working Practice (2021) Please note that we will no longer be posting any photographs showing children's faces online.

## **Prevention: Safer Environment and Activities**

The Church of England has set out national guidance as to how safety should be optimised in our environment and activities: Safer Environment and Activities (2019). This guidance includes topics such as risk assessment, managing activities for children and young people in a safe way, practical advice on providing an inclusive environment for disabled people, photography, home visits, volunteer drivers, and hiring out premises. If your volunteering means that you are responsible for one or more of the above activities, you should read and follow the national guidance, seeking clarification from the PSO if you are unsure.

## **Safer Recruitment Policy**

The Church of England set out guidance, taking effect from 2022, as to how staff and volunteers should be recruited to roles: Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance (2021) It states that, "The requirements in this guidance must be followed for the appointment of all roles within a Church body that involve substantial contact with children and/or vulnerable adults, for example, members of the clergy authorised to officiate, Readers/Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs), lay workers, youth workers, employees and volunteers". It is recognised that elected officer holders such as PCC and Churchwardens are elected rather than recruited, though they are still expected to have DBS checks and safeguarding training. It is recognised that additional guidance is in place for the appointment of clergy, including those with Permission to Officiate, and Readers/Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs), and that in some respects the process will differ from that set out below. The process followed needs to be proportionate to the role, and it is recognised that a more involved process will be appropriate for staff than for volunteers.

This is how the process will work in our parish going forward:

1. If someone identifies volunteers are needed for a role that they oversee, that involves contact with children or vulnerable adults, they will contact the PSO. If it is established that the role involves substantial contact with children or vulnerable adults, the person seeking volunteers and the PSO will be the "responsible persons" for ensuring this safer recruitment policy is followed.
2. The wording of the advert will be agreed by the responsible persons in compliance with national guidance.
3. Applicants for the role will be sent the information specified by national guidance:
  - this Safeguarding Policy, which contains this Safer Recruitment Policy and a statement of the church's commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults (in Summary and Signatures)

- the Recruitment Process, if it differs from that set out in this policy
- the Role Description and Person Specification
- the Whistleblowing Policy
- the Diocese of Gloucester Policy Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders
- a Privacy Notice

Applicants will be asked to complete an application form.

4. Applicants for volunteer roles will have a pre-volunteering chat with the person seeking volunteers and the PSO to discuss their application form, look at the role description together, and talk about safeguarding. If the applicant is a close relative of the person seeking volunteers or the PSO, an additional person will be present. If it is recruitment to an employed post, a more formalised interview process will take place.
5. If the applicant, the person seeking volunteers and the PSO all agree in principle to proceed, when applicable (i.e. for roles requiring an enhanced DBS check) the applicant will be asked to send a Confidential Declaration Form to the Diocese.
6. Two references will be taken up to confirm suitability.

For **all** roles:

- A minimum of two written references must be obtained
- Referees must be over 18 and not be family members or relatives
- 'Self-supplied', 'to whom it may concern' and verbal references must not be accepted.

7. For **volunteers**:

- At least one of the references must be from outside of the current Church body
- At least one of the references must comment on the applicant's ability to work with the group with whom he/she will be volunteering.
- If the applicant is currently working/volunteering with children, young people or vulnerable adults, or has done within the past two years, then a reference must be sought from that organisation
- If the applicant has come to the Church body from another Church body within the past two years, a reference must be sought from that previous Church body.

8. For **employees**:

- At least one of the references must be from the applicant's current/most recent employer and/or voluntary position
- A minimum referencing period of two years must be applied. This means that it may be necessary to request more than two references depending on the applicant's work history.

- If necessary, health information will be sought.
9. The appropriate level of DBS check will be carried out, which includes a check of ID.
  10. Volunteers will be given a Volunteer Agreement. Employees will be given a contract of employment. They will sign to confirm they have read and agree to abide by the Safeguarding Policy, the Code of Safer Working Practices, the Role Description, the Privacy Notice and the Whistleblowing Policy.
  11. During the volunteer's or employee's settling in period, they will be supported in person as they start their volunteering role; be given any necessary training for their role, including safeguarding training; and have the opportunity to raise any questions with the person seeking volunteers. For employed posts, this will be a more formalised probationary period.
  12. The person will receive ongoing support and/or supervision in their role as appropriate.
  13. Records will be kept of the entirety of this recruitment process.

## **Training and Development**

The PSO is responsible for keeping track of who has what level of training and making sure that people receive the correct level of safeguarding for their role, except in the cases of clergy and Readers/Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs), for whom the responsibility lies with the Diocese (the explanation below does not apply to these groups). The level of training that each person needs is set out in the Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework (2024).

Everyone must build up the levels of training, as each level must be completed before it is possible to progress to the next level. Training is to be renewed every three years. The renewal should be at the highest level of training that the person needs. For example, someone requiring the Foundation level of training would only renew that training, along with Domestic Abuse training, and would not additionally renew their Basic Awareness training.

Every "church officer" is required to undertake the Basic Awareness level of safeguarding training. The Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance (2021) states that a "church officer" is anyone appointed/elected by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid." This is a very large group of people: almost everyone who volunteers at church will need this level of training.

The Foundation level of training needs to be taken by anyone in a role which involves work with children, young people, or vulnerable adults; Churchwardens; vergers and PCC Members.

The Leadership level of training needs to be taken by the PSO.

Domestic Abuse training needs to be taken by Bishops Visitors / Pastoral Visitors, the PSO and DBS evidence checker, PCC Members and anyone working with children and young people. It is possible to be excused from this particular training if the subject matter would be too close to home.

The PSO and DBS evidence checker must also undertake Safer Recruitment and People Management training, and the PSO must undertake Parish Safeguarding Officer Induction.

It is possible to undertake the Basic Awareness, Foundation and Domestic Abuse training online. We will also aim to provide this training face to face, so that people have a choice of how to learn.

Once online training has been completed, volunteers should ideally allow the following email address access to their training record: [tidenhamsafeguarding@gmail.com](mailto:tidenhamsafeguarding@gmail.com) Alternatively, volunteers can email the certificate or print it out and give it to Rosalind. In-person training will be notified to the Diocese for their records.

Whilst all possible support will be provided to enable people to complete the training that their role requires, the [Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework \(2024\)](#) requires that if someone is unwilling to complete the training they will no longer be able to volunteer in that role.

## Responding to Concerns

To summarise: **If anyone has a safeguarding concern, they must report the concern to Robin Riordan the Parish Safeguarding Officer on 07394 693940, or email him on [tidenhamsafeguarding@gmail.com](mailto:tidenhamsafeguarding@gmail.com) or call the vicar, or in their absence, Revd Nicki Bullivant or in her absence, the Churchwardens. If the concern constitutes an emergency, the person should call 999 first, and then report to the PSO or the vicar, or in their absence, the Churchwardens. Please note, there is no Data Protection or GDPR rule that means you cannot pass on a safeguarding concern to the appropriate person. Indeed, it is your responsibility to share the information, and it is the correct thing to do. It is also possible to contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers directly on 01452 410022. It is also possible to contact Gloucestershire Children's Services directly on 01452 426565, or Gloucestershire Adults' Services on 01452 426868. The number for emergency out of hours social services is 01452 614194.**

Our Parish has adopted the guidance set out in Chapter 7 of the Parish Safeguarding Handbook (2018) (pages 18-28), which will be provided to all volunteers or staff who have substantial contact with children or vulnerable adults. The chapter includes some useful advice on how to respond to someone making a disclosure of abuse, which is reproduced here:

### "Respond

Do:

- Listen.
- Take what is said seriously.
- Only use open questions (open questions begin with words like: who, what, when, where and how. Open questions cannot be answered with a 'yes' or 'no').
- Remain calm.
- Take into account the person's age and level of understanding.
- Check, if face to face, whether they mind you taking notes while they talk so you can make sure you capture the information accurately. At the end you can check with them that you have understood everything correctly.
- Offer reassurance that disclosing is the right thing to do.

- Establish only as much information as is needed to be able to tell your activity leader/ Parish Safeguarding Officer/ DSA and statutory authorities what is believed to have happened, when and where.
- Check what the person hopes to happen as a result of the disclosure.
- Tell the child or adult what you are going to do next.

Do not:

- Make promises that cannot be kept (e.g. that you won't share the information).
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations.
- Investigate.
- Contact the person about whom allegations have been made.
- Do a physical or medical examination.

### Record

- Make some very brief notes at the time, if appropriate, and write them up in detail as soon as possible.
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by the DSA or the statutory authorities.
- Record the date, time, place and actual words used, including any swear words or slang.
- Record facts and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions.
- Don't speculate or jump to conclusions.

### Report

- If there is immediate danger to a child or adult contact the police.
- Otherwise report to your activity leader/Parish Safeguarding Officer/incumbent immediately.
- Within 24 hours the PSO/incumbent reports the concerns to the DSA.
- The DSA will advise regarding reporting to statutory agencies within 24 hours.
- If there is any doubt seek advice from Children's/Adult's Social Care or the police."

If there has been, or is alleged to have been, a Safeguarding Serious Incident connected to its activities (as opposed to an incident that we are aware of but that is not related to the church's activities), the PCC is additionally obliged to report this to the Charity Commission. This is further defined in Safeguarding Serious Incident Reporting to the Charity Commission (2021). This would be determined and carried out by the Safeguarding Committee of the PCC.

## **Supporting Those Who Have Experienced Abuse**

This topic is addressed in the following Church of England policies:

Responding Well To Victims and Survivors of Abuse (2021)

[Managing Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations \(2024\)](#)

## Reporting Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations (2025)

Our priority is the safety of the persons who have experienced abuse and of others who could be vulnerable to abuse. Information about safeguarding concerns will only be shared with those who need to know. When an adult or a child makes a disclosure of abuse, or a safeguarding concern comes to light in any other way, this must be passed on by the person who has received the disclosure/ become aware of a concern to the PSO Robin Riordan or the vicar, or in their absence, Revd Nicki Bullivant. The PSO or vicar will then discuss the matter with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA). The DSA may make referrals to statutory agencies, such as the Police or Gloucestershire County Council. In the case of an adult, this will generally only happen if the person consents, or if the alleged perpetrator could also present a risk to others, or to assist in the prevention, detection or prosecution of a crime. Information may also be shared if there is concern that someone intends to harm themselves. In the case of a child, their parents will be made aware of the disclosure, unless in specific circumstances set out in the policy documents above. We will not inform the alleged abuser of the disclosure, though if statutory agencies become involved they may inform the person, or ask the DSA to do so, and the Diocese core group may make a decision for the DSA to do so. Safeguarding concerns will be discussed in the Safeguarding Committee, which consists of the vicar (or until they are appointed, Revd Nicki Bullivant) the PSO, and two PCC members, at least one of whom is a Churchwarden. It will not be discussed in this group in the case of an adult disclosing abuse where the alleged perpetrator is not a church officer, there is no risk to others and the adult does not consent to the matter being discussed. In this circumstance, the PSO will inform the vicar or vice versa, and they will, where possible, seek advice from the DSA without disclosing the identities of the adult and the alleged abuser.

We will take any necessary action to prevent further abuse. This could include: contacting the police in an emergency; contacting Gloucestershire County Council if a decision needs to be made quickly to keep someone safe; and ensuring that the alleged perpetrator does not have unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults whilst the disclosure is looked into. The DSA may inform other settings where the alleged perpetrator works with children or vulnerable adults that an allegation has been made. The church may, with the guidance of the DSA, refer an individual to the Disclosure and Barring Service in circumstances set out in legislation.

If abuse by a church officer has been alleged, the church will work with the DSA to identify what therapeutic support can be offered to the person who has disclosed abuse, should they wish to accept this. The DSA will arrange for the person who has disclosed abuse to be supported by a named Support Person from outside the Parish, if they wish. The DSA and the church will work together to ensure the person disclosing abuse has appropriate spiritual and pastoral support. The Church of England has a central fund called the Interim Support Scheme to provide urgent short-term financial assistance for victims of church-based abuse. The church will be guided by the DSA as to whether and at what stage it is appropriate to apologise to the person disclosing abuse.

The Church of England funds a confidential independent support service, provided by First Light, called Safe Spaces. This is available to any adult who has experienced abuse, whether current or historical, and does not require you to have disclosed the abuse. Its website <https://safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk/> explains:

“Remote support is provided nationally through our helpline on **0300 303 1056**

You can also email [safespaces@firstlight.org.uk](mailto:safespaces@firstlight.org.uk), or use the webchat service available on this website.

We can help with advocating with authorities and other agencies, giving you emotional support, understanding your needs and working together on individual support plans. If face-to-face support is wanted local to where you live, we will try to contact appropriate agencies depending on need.”

## **Responding to Alleged Perpetrators**

The Church of England has set out a policy that covers this topic:

- [Managing Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations \(2024\)](#)

The church will be guided by the DSA in any action taken in relation to church officers about whom safeguarding concerns have arisen. A Link Person from outside the parish will be offered to any church officer about whom concerns have arisen.

If we become aware that a person has joined our church about whom safeguarding concerns have previously been raised, the PSO will inform the DSA, and it is possible that a Church Safety Plan will be put into place to manage any risks.

If a person about whom there are safeguarding concerns leaves our church to join another, we will inform the DSA.

The DSA may inform other settings where the alleged perpetrator works with children or vulnerable adults that an allegation has been made.

The church may, with the guidance of the DSA, refer an individual to the Disclosure and Barring Service in circumstances set out in legislation.

The church will continue to provide spiritual and pastoral care for people about whom safeguarding concerns have been raised.

## **Record-Keeping**

The PSO is responsible for maintaining records of all safeguarding matters, including but not limited to the following:

- who requires a DBS check, when these were done, and the certificate numbers
- who requires what level of safeguarding training, and when this was undertaken
- any safeguarding concerns and how these were dealt with
- the safer recruitment process carried out for those having significant contact with children and vulnerable adults in their roles, including their application forms and references
- informal minutes of Safeguarding Committee meetings

These records will generally be electronic rather than paper based, and we aim to scan in remaining paper-based records. All records will be stored securely. Information will be processed in accordance with GDPR requirements and our parish privacy notice.

## **Tidenham PCC Handling Safeguarding Complaints Procedure**

Issue 2: May 2025

### **1 Introduction**

1.1 This formal handling safeguarding complaints procedure is issued by Tidenham Parochial Church Council (PCC) for the use of those wishing to complain about how a safeguarding issue has been handled by Tidenham Parish Church.

### **1.2 Principles**

- We are committed to ensure that anyone who raises complaints with us about how a safeguarding issue has been handled is treated with respect, listened to and supported, and dealt with fairly and promptly.
- All information about a complaint will be treated in the strictest confidence.
- Complaints which fall under this procedure may include how we:
  - o handled a referral to us
  - o complied with our safeguarding practices
  - o made decisions regarding a safeguarding issue, or how we
  - o responded to a child, vulnerable adult, or the parent /carer or to an alleged perpetrator.
- Complaints should relate to the process followed, not to the original incident which gave rise to the allegation

### **2 Who can make a complaint and where should it be directed?**

2.1 Whilst every effort will be made to resolve your complaint informally, if it is not possible to do so, you may make use of this formal complaints procedure and contact the Chair of the PCC: Brian Duerden.

### **2.2 Your complaint must include / cover:**

- Your full name, postal address and contact details,
- What you think went wrong and how it has affected you, including details of your specific complaint,
- The outcomes you are seeking from your complaint, e.g. what might be put in

place to put matters right, and

- How you consider there has been a failure to comply with national or diocesan safeguarding policy and guidance. It is not enough to say that you disagree with the professional decisions which have been made in your case.

2.3 You should make your complaint in writing, marked “confidential” to Brian Duerden at our usual address for church correspondence:

c/o Tidenham Vicarage, Gloucester Road Tutshill, CHEPSTOW NP16 7DU.

2.4 You can email Brian confidentially at [bduerden70@gmail.com](mailto:bduerden70@gmail.com) or telephone on 07809 671955.

2.5 Unless there are exceptional circumstances, you should complain within 3 months of the event or outcome that you are complaining about.

### 3 What will happen if a complaint is received?

3.1 If you submit a complaint to the Chair of the PCC you will receive an acknowledgement by letter or e-mail, to confirm receipt of your complaint, usually within five working days of it being received.

3.2 If they consider that your complaint falls within this procedure, they will arrange to discuss it with you either by phone or in person. At this meeting they may arrange for an independent note taker to be present so that a record is made.

### 4 How will complaints be progressed and resolved?

4.1 Wherever possible complaints will be resolved amicably, professionally and with pastoral care and sensitivity.

4.2 Individuals making complaints will be dealt with courteously and professionally. Information will be clarified and any further information sought.

4.3 Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant will set out how the complaint was progressed and conclusions and set out how a referral can be made (see section 5 below).

4.4 As appropriate where actions/decisions are taken in relation to a complaint these will be shared with the complainant. This will not include personal employment information about any member of staff.

4.5 Each person progressing a complaint will keep clear notes, and copies of any correspondence related to it (kept and stored within data protection provisions).

### 5 What happens if a complainant is unhappy with the outcome of their complaint?

5.1 If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at the

first stages set out in 4 above, or if the Chair of the PCC deems it necessary, they may refer the complaint for further follow up or a full review to a person from Gloucester Diocesan Safeguarding Team who will have no previous knowledge of, or involvement with, the matter. Exceptionally, a second person may be appointed to assist. Any person appointed to this independent review will have substantial experience and knowledge of safeguarding.

5.2 The appointed independent person(s) will read any files and will meet the complainant to ascertain full details of the complaint. The complainant may ask a friend or supporter (but not a legal representative) to attend this meeting with them.

5.3 Such a meeting shall be as informal as possible and the person appointed by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team will explain the purpose of the meeting, introduce all persons present and emphasise confidentiality. Proceedings will be minuted by the appointed person who will also establish with the complainant the extent and manner of updating them if necessary on progress. The complainant will be sent a copy of the minutes of the meeting.

5.4 The independent appointed person will look fairly into the complaint including seeking the views on the matter from any person to whom the complaint refers. The appointed person may seek advice/views from others. At the conclusion of their review they will complete a report which will be sent to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

5.5 The independent appointed person will then write to the complainant, with a copy to the local Churchwardens, summarising the findings and recommendations of the report and outlining any follow up actions. Such actions may include, for example, where appropriate, an apology and an explanation of any changes to be made in policies and procedures.

5.6 Where such actions may involve employment issues (such as disciplinary, or training requirements etc) these will be referred to the appropriate line manager.

5.7 The Independent Chair's letter will be the final response to the complaint.

5.8 If, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome and tries to reopen the same issue, the Chair will inform them in writing that (in the absence of any new evidence or other compelling reason which has not previously been considered) the procedure has been duly exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

5.9 A record is kept of any complaint received, actions taken and any review processes required.

- date complaint(s) received
- name of complainant
- brief description of complaint(s)
- details of the person(s) appointed to assist in dealing with complaint(s)
- summary of the outcome of the complaint(s), and how/when communicated to complainant
- any verbal/written response(s) to the outcome received from complainant
- any actions to be taken and any time frame in which such actions should happen.

5.10 If the complaint refers to a member of clergy, including the Bishop of Gloucester or the Bishop of Tewkesbury, Archdeacons or other clergy, the Church of England's Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 rather than this procedure will apply.

Information about the Clergy Discipline Measure is available at: Clergy Discipline | The Church of England

## 6 Reviewing this policy

6.1 As we are in vacancy, the Churchwardens are responsible for ensuring this policy is shared across the team, and with key volunteers.

6.2 The PCC may review this policy annually or at any time it sees fit.

## Support Organisations

Childline (Help for anyone aged under 18)    [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)    0800 1111

Talk Well (Counselling and support for young people aged 9-25 and their families)  
Call: 01594 372777    Text: 07520634063    [www.talkwell.org.uk](http://www.talkwell.org.uk)

NSPCC (if you are concerned about a child)    [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)    0808 800 5000

Stop It Now (prevention of child sexual abuse)    [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)    0808 1000 900

National Domestic Abuse Helpline (support for women experiencing domestic abuse)  
[www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk)    0808 2000 247

Restored (support for women experiencing domestic abuse)    [www.restored-uk.org](http://www.restored-uk.org)

Men's Advice Line (support for men experiencing domestic abuse) [www.mensadviceline.org.uk](http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk)  
0808 801 0327

Safe Spaces (support for adults who have ever been abused by someone in the Church of England)  
[www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk](http://www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk) 0300 303 1056

MIND UK (Mental health support) [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) 0300 123 3393

The Clewer Initiative (Anonymously Report Modern Slavery) [www.theclewerinitiative.org](http://www.theclewerinitiative.org)

## Summary and Signatures

This safeguarding policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting held on 13.05.2024 and amended by the PCC through email on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025. This summary is taken from the Parish Safeguarding Handbook (2018):

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy our church is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.


The Parish will:

- Create a safe and caring place for all.
- Have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately.
- Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- Care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.

- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

Each person who works within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

This church appoints Robin Riordan as the Parish Safeguarding Officer

Churchwardens .....Brian Duerden, Robin Riordan

Date:... 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025 .....