

## **The Parish of Marcham with Garford**

### **Annual Safeguarding Report for APCM, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

Safeguarding is always a team effort, and as a Parish and PCC we take it very seriously. Sadly, as we all know, churches have not always been places of safety for children or vulnerable adults, and a vital part of your PCC's work is to ensure that our church does not become a place where harm or abuse can occur without being prevented, detected or stopped. We cannot ever relax our guard. Some of the recent 'historic' abuses that have come to light have revealed that, when powerful charismatic church or para-church leaders become abusers, any of us can become vulnerable. As your Acting Parish Safeguarding Officer, I am enormously grateful for those who have supported in so many ways over the past year or so, and without whose hard work and commitment we could not have achieved these aims. In particular, Tamsin, who has continued to maintain our required records of Safeguarding Training for PCC members and those working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Similarly, we are grateful to Jill Rowe, as Families' Minister, and Rob Finch, as Youth Worker, for the consistent care and responsible oversight they both exercise, and not least in supporting our many volunteers in their roles in these crucial ministry areas.

Carolyn Whiting has kindly agreed to take over from Tamsin the important task of recording safeguarding training in the Parish, and its checking and updating over time. Covid has of course changed life for us all, but it has not altered our duty of care. What has changed is the way we do safeguarding under these new circumstances, and the procedures we adopt. We do have a small number of significant ongoing safeguarding cases, which we try to deal with carefully, confidentially, sensitively and lovingly. Those involved work and pray tremendously hard, often over long periods and under significant personal pressure. This is not easy or straightforward work, and it entails personal sacrifice, unseen by others. Revd. Mark Newman has led our small team superbly during the interregnum, and his chaplaincy and mental health experience have been invaluable. We have been working in close cooperation with the Diocese too, as we are required to. We are grateful for their support, albeit with some difficulties in continuity around times of inevitable staff changes. We have appreciated their advice and intervention, especially in areas of complex multi-agency involvement, where getting the necessary balance between confidentiality and inter-agency communication and cooperation can be hard.

Some of you know that I am still looking to hand over the PSO role to someone, or perhaps two people in a 'job-share', who feel called to help in this vital but largely hidden area of service. Like many callings, it can be both challenging and deeply satisfying, and I would encourage anyone interested to pray first, and always, and last, and perhaps talk with myself or Tamsin in between!

We are all grateful for your support and understanding, and please, as always, do not hesitate to be in touch with one of us, in confidence, should you have any concerns. Thank you.

Tim Jack,  
Acting PSO,  
May 2021.