

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

### **Annual Safeguarding Report for APCM, Sunday 1 May 2022**

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.

As your Parish Safeguarding Officer, I am enormously grateful for those who have supported in so many ways over the past year, and without whose hard work and commitment we could not have achieved these aims. In particular, Carolyn Whiting, who has maintained 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.

Covid has of course changed life for us all, but it has not altered our duty of care. What did change was the way we did safeguarding under those circumstances, and the procedures we adopted. 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 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.

We are committed to encouraging everyone in the church to do some basic training as well as ensuring that those who require more specialised training receive it - to help create a safer place for all.

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.

Ruth Atkins,  
PSO,  
May 2022