

The Parish of Marcham with Garford

Annual Safeguarding Report for APCM, Sunday 26th April 2026

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 must also remember that we are safeguarding ourselves as staff and volunteers.

As a growing church, we want to welcome those who are vulnerable, but this comes with safeguarding challenges. Safe recruitment practice is crucial and means much more than DBS checks it means ongoing training, self-checks and reviews from ministry leads. All that said I believe that safeguarding should be enthusiastically welcomed in a church where every individual is cherished and valued and although some of the procedures may be seen as onerous, the point of it all becomes clear as we look at ongoing safeguarding failures in all walks of life, not only the Church of England

As your Parish Safeguarding Officer, I am enormously grateful for those who have supported me in so many ways over the past year, and without whose hard work and commitment we could not have achieved these aims. In particular, Shaena Porter, who maintained our required records of safeguarding training for PCC members and those working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Shaena is now standing back from her administration role, and I am now undertaking this role. Similarly, I am 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.

In July 2025 the PPC approved the Church's Safeguarding Policy [All Saints Safeguarding Policy July 2025.docx](#) The policy includes guidance on the use of social media. I advise all members of the parish to read the policy.

We have a small number of 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.

Quarterly safeguarding reports are now being presented to the PCC and first one was in February 2026. This report provides detail of the safeguarding work being undertaken across the church community.

I am now completing the Parish Dashboard which is a tool for all parishes. It has two primary aims:

- To make safeguarding simpler for parishes – and the feedback from incumbents and safeguarding officers who use the dashboards has been overwhelmingly positive.
- To measure and report parish compliance – with parish data being automatically collected.

The introduction of the Parish Dashboard allows for regular updates on action plans and compliance.

Rev. Nick Weldon and I continue to work in close cooperation with the Diocese too, as we are required to. We are grateful for their support and have appreciated their advice and intervention.

I am grateful for your support and understanding, and please, as always, do not hesitate to be in touch with me, in confidence, should you have any concerns. Thank you.

Ruth Atkins,
Parish Safeguarding Officer
April 2026

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