

Safeguarding Policy

St Thomas' and Holy Trinity Churches, Trowbridge and St John's Church, West Ashton

Revised and agreed at the meeting of the St Thomas' Parochial Church Council on
15th September 2026.

Revised and agreed at the meeting of the St John's Parochial Church Council
on 4th September 2025

The Parochial Church Council reserves the right to review this policy as appropriate.

Parish Safeguarding Officer 'PSO' (as appointed by the PCC 13 May 2025):

Martyn Whittock

07778 939415

(with overall St Thomas' Parish responsibility and also primary responsibility for safeguarding children and young people at St Thomas', and Holy Trinity - which comes under St Thomas')

Parish Safeguarding Representatives (as appointed by the PCC 13 May 2025):

Gemma Mason

07419732567

(with primary responsibility for safeguarding vulnerable adults at St Thomas' and Holy Trinity)

Jean Covington

01225 761904

(with responsibility for safeguarding as the PSO at St John's Church, West Ashton)

If none of the above are available, or if there are concerns over their conduct:

Diocesan Safeguarding Officer

01722 438651 option 2

Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Verifier:

Frankie Smith (assisted by **Jo Deacon**)

Additional means to raise concerns: Church Office: 01225 777331 or email
safeguarding@stthomastrowbridge.org or office@stthomastrowbridge.org

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Introduction

Safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults is a vitally important issue that requires a professional attitude and commitment. We here at St Thomas', Holy Trinity and St John's regard the issue of Safeguarding as a major priority.

Our aim is to ensure that all of those in the Church involved with working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are aware of the signs to look out for regarding a suspicion of abuse, and are also aware of the system of reporting suspicions of any allegations made to them.

Our aim is to foster a climate of openness and trust between staff/volunteers and the children, young people and vulnerable adults within an environment where the children/young people/vulnerable adults are comfortable.

Definition of child/young person/vulnerable adult

For safeguarding purposes, a child/young person is defined as anyone under the age of 18, although for a young person in local authority care the age increases to 25.

A vulnerable adult is defined as any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently, or for the time being, unable to take care of him or herself, or to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Safeguarding Mission Statement

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of all children and all adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- the establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of 'informed vigilance' as to the dangers of abuse

We will:

- carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with safer recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration with the relevant vetting and barring schemes
- respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, co-operating with the police and local authority in any investigation
- work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with him or her an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care
- seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust
- seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult

In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.

Good practice

It is possible to reduce situations for the abuse of children and help protect staff/volunteers by promoting good practice.

- Always be in a public space when working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Avoid any situation where a member of staff/volunteer and individual children, young people or vulnerable adults are completely unobserved.
- Do not be alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult; abuse can happen in seconds, and you leave yourself open to allegations.
- Do not take children, young people or vulnerable adults alone on car journeys, however short.
- Do not take children, young people or vulnerable adults to your home where they will be alone with you.

Guidelines for discipline

- Do not compare a child, young person or adult with another in the group; rather encourage and affirm and, if possible, give them responsibility for appropriate tasks.
- Build healthy relationships and be a good role model by setting an example. You can't expect others to observe the ground rules if you break them yourself.
- Take care to give attention to the quieter and/or well-behaved individuals and resist allowing the demanding individuals to take all your time and energy.
- Be consistent in what you say and ensure that other team members know what you have said. This avoids manipulation.
- If children, young people and vulnerable adults are bored they often misbehave, so review your programme regularly.
- NEVER smack or hit anyone and don't shout. Change voice tone if necessary.
- Call on support from other leaders if you feel so angry you may deal with the situation unwisely.
- Lay down ground rules e.g. no swearing, racism or calling each other names, respect for property, and make sure everyone understands what action will be taken if not adhered to.
- Every person is unique and will respond in different ways to different forms of discipline. It follows therefore that each child, young person or vulnerable adult should be dealt with on an individual basis.

Some children, young people and vulnerable adults have a tendency to be disruptive in a group. Give them a chance, warn them and only separate them from a group as a last resort.

- If a child, young person or vulnerable adult is disruptive, ensure another leader/helper sits next to them.
- Be proactive and encourage helpers to be proactive rather than waiting to be told to deal with a situation.

- Take a disruptive child, young person or vulnerable adult to one side, engage with them, challenge them to change, encourage their strengths.
- Remedial action can be taken against a constantly disruptive child, young person or vulnerable adult. Warn them that you may speak to their parents/carers about their behaviour. They may be sent outside the room (under supervision), back into church or, after consultation with a church leader and advising the parent/carer, be banned from attending the group for a period of time.
- If a child, young person or vulnerable adult's behaviour continues to be disruptive despite measures taken above, seek advice and guidance from a leader.
- Pray with the other workers before the session and take time to debrief before you leave.

Unacceptable practice

- Doing things of a personal nature that children, young people or vulnerable adults can do for themselves e.g. help with dressing, changing etc.
- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult away from others.
- Taking children, young people or vulnerable adults alone on car journeys, however short. *There should always be two adults in a car, at least one of whom is DBS cleared, and there should never be just one child, young person or vulnerable person in a car.*
- Never:
 - engage in rough play, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
 - share a room with a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
 - allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
 - allow children, young people or vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
 - make sexually suggestive comments to a child, young person or vulnerable adult, even in fun.
 - allow allegations made by a child, young person or vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
 - invite or allow children, young people or vulnerable adults to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

It may sometimes be necessary for staff or workers/volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, young people or vulnerable adults particularly if they are young or have disabilities. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and written consent of parents/carers and, if of an age and understanding, of the child, young person or vulnerable adult involved.

Disclosure procedures:

How to respond

(Refer also to flowchart and Appendices 1 and 2)

- Above everything else listen, listen, listen
- Show acceptance of what the child, young person or vulnerable adult says (however unlikely the story may sound)
- Keep calm
- Look at the child, young person or vulnerable adult directly
- Be honest
- Tell the child, young person or vulnerable adult you will need to let someone else know. Don't promise confidentiality, but be aware at all times that the information that has been shared with you should only be given to the Parish Safeguarding Representative/clergy member
- Even when a child, young person or vulnerable adult has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware that the child, young person or vulnerable adult may have been threatened or bribed not to tell
- A good model of how to ask questions is the TED model. When an individual has disclosed something, and you wish to gain more information and avoid asking closed questions, TED stands for TELL me about how it happened or EXPLAIN to me what happened and DESCRIBE to me what happened. Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. BUT never push for information. Do not ask leading questions. If the child, young person or vulnerable adult decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.
- As soon as possible write down what has been shared.

HELPFUL RESPONSES

- You have done the right thing in telling
- That must have been really hard
- I am glad you have told me
- It's not your fault
- I will help you

DON'T SAY

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
 - Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- Never make false promises
- Never make statements such as "I am shocked, don't tell anyone else"

MAKING NOTES

Make notes as soon as possible, preferably within one hour of the child talking to you. Write down exactly what the child, young person or vulnerable adult said and when he/she said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity).

Keep all handwritten notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be handed to the Parish Safeguarding Representative or Vicar to be kept in a secure place for an indefinite period.

Action to take

(Refer also to flowchart and Appendices 1 and 2)

- Stop what you are doing and respect the child, young person or vulnerable adult's privacy
- If possible, move to a place where other people are around and invite someone to join you
- Stay calm and reassuring, listen, and tell them they are not to blame
- Do not react in a way which may add to the child, young person or vulnerable adult's distress e.g. anger or shock
- Explain that you cannot promise to keep a secret – you will have to tell someone else
- Do not question the child, young person or vulnerable adult in depth, rather establish what was done and who did it, avoid leading questions
- Reassure the child, young person or vulnerable adult that they are doing the right thing and show acceptance
- Let the child, young person or vulnerable adult know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- Make an accurate record of the time and date and of exactly what was said
- Do NOT contact parents/carers until you have received advice
- Contact the relevant Parish Safeguarding Representative or, in their absence, one of the other Parish Safeguarding Representatives or the Vicar. Depending on what you have been told they will take action and advise on what action you should take, if any
- Pass all notes of the conversation to them.
- Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed
- **In an emergency you should dial 999**

Other Guidance

Filming and taking photographs

Since the introduction of the Data Protection Act in 1998 and the recent GDPR legislation, organisations must be careful if they want to take photographs or film footage of people, and how images are used. This does not mean that photographs should not be taken, or filming prohibited, but there are certain protocols that must be followed to comply with data protection legislation as well as to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

From 2018 new guidelines have required the PCC to adopt a policy regarding photographs and video recordings. The requirements are that

- two notices be clearly displayed at every event – one explaining how we as a church handle photographs/videos at events, and another saying that photographs/video recordings are not permitted during the course of services/events in our churches
- parents/carers of all children/young people/vulnerable adults should give written consent to any photographs/video recordings being used for church purposes, either in printed materials, on the website, or other media (such as CD ROM or video conferencing via Zoom or Microsoft Teams) and that we will protect the identity of the child/young person/vulnerable adult.

The policy is included in this document as Appendix 3.

Electronic Communication

As an ever-increasing number of people use and prefer digital communication over other forms, it is essential that the church be present in this mission field. Social networking sites, on-the-spot communication devices and email can enhance communication, faith sharing and deepen relationships. However, it is vital we engage in this mission field in a way that puts the safety and protection of young people at paramount importance.

A 'Social Network site' is defined as any internet-based communication tool, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, Blogs, instant messaging services, etc.

We recognise that these guidelines apply particularly to work with young people (over 11s) and vulnerable adults. Electronic communication with under 11s is only appropriate through the wider family unit, though there may be some cases where email is used to communicate directly with older primary school aged children. We recognise Facebook has a minimum age of 13 and will in no way encourage young people to break this law while it stands.

Emailing and Texting

- Email and texts are most suited to communication of news and group events, and messages of encouragement. They are not appropriate communication methods for matters that are pastorally/legally sensitive, emotionally charged or require extensive conversation. If this is the case, the matter is always better addressed via live conversation, and where possible face to face.
- Adults who minister to young people/vulnerable adults must not send emails/texts solely to an individual young person/vulnerable adult. If a message needs to be sent, the adult should include another youth leader, or where appropriate the parents or guardians/carers or the Parish Safeguarding Representative. Including another adult into the responses is not necessary if emailing a group of five or more young people.
- Text communication with young people is not encouraged at all between 10.30pm and 7am.
- Should any communication received from young people/vulnerable adults, or sent by adults, be of a pastoral, sensitive or emotionally charged nature, adults should seek to keep records of such conversations.
- Email and text users should consider the ramifications of their message before clicking on the "send" or "reply to all" button. All users should be aware that emails and texts about church ministries and its members come under St Thomas'/Holy Trinity/St John's data protection policy including sending group messages using the Bcc (blind copy) facility.
- Picture messages must not be sent, if the image is of the individual youth leader.

Social Networking Sites

- Adults should not submit 'friend' requests to any young person/vulnerable adult but may encourage others to submit 'friend' requests where appropriate. Leaders are allowed to publicise and encourage subscription to public 'groups' or 'pages' that can be used to send information to a young person via social networking sites.
- Adults who minister to young people or vulnerable adults are strongly encouraged to set stringent privacy settings on any personal social networking profile.

- All interaction with young people or vulnerable adults via social networking sites must be done publicly. Adults must not send private messages solely to individual young people or vulnerable adults, and the above guidelines on “emailing and texting” should be followed in any social network correspondence.
- Adults must never engage in private ‘chats’ with young people or vulnerable adults online. (e.g. MSN messenger, Facebook chat etc) and should have privacy settings enabled so that young people are unable to detect when the adult is online.
- Adults must never post images or media of children, young people or vulnerable adults online without prior written consent from parents/carers. Appropriate caution should be taken by all group users in linking personal information with photographs.
- Adult leaders should consider the content and nature of any post that will be read by or visible to others. Your voice is often considered to be the voice of the church.
- Any groups/pages must be administrated by at least two youth leaders and must not be ‘hidden’. The administrators are responsible for frequent monitoring of the material posted by all users and should ensure that it is appropriate for a church-linked group. Inappropriate material e.g. bad language, sexual innuendo, personal criticism etc. should be removed. If there is any suspicion of abuse/neglect/exploitation of children or young people, then an exact record of that must be kept, the referral process be started, and the offending material should be removed from the site. Any material on any site (whether affiliated with the church or not) that raises suspicion that a child has been or will be abused/neglected/exploited should be reported to the appropriate authorities immediately.

All safeguarding concerns in relation to children (those under 18 years of age), must now be reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), who will alert the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer under new Church of England guidance.

Definitions of abuse

Abuse has many forms. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child, young person or vulnerable adult. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child, young person or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children, young people or vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger, for example via the internet. They may be abused by another adult or adults, or another child or children.

The following categories of abuse are described in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010, in the Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook and in the central government document ‘Care and Support Statutory Guidance’:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, misuse of medication, restraint, inappropriate sanctions or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in, a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child, young person or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children, young people or vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children, young people or vulnerable adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child, young person or vulnerable adult in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children, young people or vulnerable adult.

Psychological abuse includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Neglect or acts of omission is the persistent failure to meet a child, young person or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the health or development. This includes ignoring medical needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health care, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, young person or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on emotional development.

It may involve conveying to a child, young person or vulnerable person that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child, young person or vulnerable adult opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations.

The following signs of abuse apply mostly, but not solely, to vulnerable adults.

Financial or material abuse including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Domestic abuse usually comprises systematic, repeated and escalating pattern of behaviour, by which the abuser seeks to control, limit and humiliate, often behind closed doors.

Discriminatory abuse including racist, sexist, based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Organisational abuse including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home. This may range from one-off incidents to ongoing ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Modern slavery including human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude; and traffickers and slave masters using whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Recognising possible signs of abuse

It can often be difficult to recognise abuse. The signs listed in these guidelines are only indicators and many can have reasonable explanations. Children, young people and vulnerable adults may behave strangely or seem unhappy for many reasons, as they move through the stages of life or their families/caring experience changes. It is nevertheless important to know what could indicate that abuse is taking place and to be alert to the need to consult further.

Physical signs of abuse

Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them; injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc; or injuries which have not received medical attention.

Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming; repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains; bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation; cuts/scratches/substance abuse.

Indicators of possible sexual abuse

Any allegations made by a child, young person or vulnerable adult concerning sexual abuse; child, young person or vulnerable adult with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play; sexual activity through words, play or drawing; child, young person or vulnerable adult who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults; inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home or in an institution; severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations; eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia.

Signs of neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Exposure to danger, cold or starvation; significant impairment of health and development; non-organic failure to thrive; under nourishment, failure to grow and thrive, constant hunger, stealing/gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc; children, young people or vulnerable adults left unattended or unsupervised; significant under-stimulation; persistent evasion of health services.

Emotional signs of abuse

Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child, young person or vulnerable adult withdraws or becomes clinging. Also, depression/aggression, extreme anxiety. Nervousness, frozen watchfulness, obsessions or phobias; sudden under-achievement or lack of; concentration; inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults; attention-seeking behaviour; persistent tiredness; running away/stealing/lying.

Further definitions of abuse

Significant harm

This relates to the degree of harm that triggers statutory action to protect a child, young person or vulnerable adult. It is based on the individual's health or development compared to that which could reasonably be expected. e.g. severity of ill treatment, degree and extent of physical harm, duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, premeditation. Department of Health guidance suggests that 'significant' means 'considerable, noteworthy or important.'

Illness is fabricated or induced

(formerly known as Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy)

This is a form of abuse in which the parent(s)/carer(s) give false accounts of symptoms in their children, young person or vulnerable adult and may fake signs of illness (to draw attention to themselves). They seek repeated medical investigations and needless treatment for their children, young people or vulnerable adult. The government guidance on this is found in 'Safeguarding Children in whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced' (2002).

Spiritual abuse

Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse is defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing children, young people or vulnerable adults into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves. Some indicators of spiritual abuse might be a leader who is intimidating and imposes his/her will on other people, perhaps threatening dire consequences or the wrath of God if disobeyed. He or she may say that God has revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose the leader's (or more seriously God's) acceptance and approval.

Domestic violence

The shared Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and government definition of domestic violence is: 'any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender and sexuality.' (Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or stepfamily.)

In 2004 the Government's definition of domestic violence was extended to include acts perpetrated by extended family members as well as intimate partners. Consequently, acts such as forced marriage and other so-called 'honour crimes', which can include abduction and homicide, can now come under the definition of domestic violence.

The definition of domestic violence in Working Together 2010 states:

Forced marriage and honour-based violence are human rights abuses and fall within the Government's definition of domestic violence. Home Office (2009) What is Domestic Violence? London: Home Office defines domestic violence as 'Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'. Nearly a quarter of adults in England are victims of domestic violence. Although both men and women can be victimised in this way, a greater proportion of women experience all forms of domestic violence and are more likely to be seriously injured or killed by their partner, ex-partner or lover.

Investigating complex (organised or multiple) abuse

This abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of children, young people or vulnerable adults. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, young people or vulnerable adults, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children, young people or vulnerable adults for abuse.

Complex abuse occurs both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools. Such abuse is profoundly traumatic for

the children, young people or vulnerable adults who become involved. Its investigation is time-consuming and demanding work, requiring specialist skills from both police and social work staff. Some investigations become extremely complex because of the number of places and people involved, and the timescale over which abuse is alleged to have occurred. The complexity is heightened where, as in historical cases, the alleged victims are no longer living in the setting where the incidents occurred or where the alleged perpetrators are also no longer linked to the setting or employment role.

Sexual exploitation

The sexual exploitation of children, young people or vulnerable adults is described in the government guidance document as "involving exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where children, young people or vulnerable adults receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of their performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. It can occur through the use of technology without the child, young person or vulnerable adult's immediate recognition e.g. being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child, young person or vulnerable adult have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child, young people or vulnerable adult's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability."

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The World Health Organisation defines FGM as all procedures involving partial or total removal or stitching up of the female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. Working Together (2010) states: Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a collective term for procedures which include the removal of part or all of the external female genitalia for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful, and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. The procedure is typically performed on girls aged between four and thirteen, but in some cases FGM is performed on newborn infants or on young women before marriage or pregnancy. A number of girls die as a direct result of the procedure from blood loss or infection, either following the procedure or subsequently in childbirth.

FGM has been a criminal offence in the UK since the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 was passed. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 replaced the 1985 Act and made it an offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out FGM abroad, or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal. FGM is much more common than most people realise, both worldwide and in the UK. It is reportedly practised in 28 African countries and in parts of the Middle and Far East but is increasingly found in Western Europe and other developed countries, primarily amongst immigrant and refugee communities. There are substantial populations from countries where FGM is endemic in London, Liverpool, Birmingham, Sheffield and Cardiff but it is likely that communities in which FGM is practised reside throughout the UK. It has been estimated that up to 24,000 girls under the age of 15 are at risk of FGM in the UK. [Available from Dorkenoo et al, 2007 FORWARD UK].

Abuse and Information Communication Technology

As technology develops, the Internet and its range of content services can be accessed through various devices including mobile phones, computers and game consoles. As a consequence, with its rapid growth and widespread use, the Internet has become a significant tool in the distribution of sexual images, photographs and video clips, some of which are sexually abusive to children, young people and vulnerable adults. There is also a growing cause for concern about the exposure of children, young people or vulnerable adults to inappropriate material via interactive communication technology e.g. extreme forms of obscene material.

Internet chat rooms, discussion forums and bulletin boards are used as a means of contacting children, young people and vulnerable adults with a view to grooming them for inappropriate or abusive relationships. This may involve adults with a sexual interest in children, young people or vulnerable adults representing themselves as young people in an attempt to make contact. Agencies working with children, young people and vulnerable adults should address the safe use of the Internet in their policies and procedures ensuring that all staff members are aware of when to be concerned and the action to be taken.

Who are the abusers?

Potentially anyone, adult or child, can be an abuser. Abuse will sometimes be deliberate, but it may also be an unintended consequence of ignorance or lack of awareness. Alternatively, it may arise from frustration or lack of support. The list can include:

- Relatives of the child, young person or vulnerable adult, including a parent, husband, wife, partner, son, daughter, brother, sister or could include a relative who is a main carer.
- Teachers
- Neighbours
- Paid or volunteer carers
- Workers in places of worship
- People who are themselves vulnerable and/or are users of a care service
- Confidence tricksters who prey on people in their own homes or elsewhere
- Hospital, prison and residential home visitors

Role of the Parish Safeguarding Representative (aka the Parish Safeguarding Officer PSO)

If possible abuse is reported, the Parish Safeguarding Representative should ask for a brief written factual statement from the person making the report. **While an additional 'Safeguarding Representative' (Liz Atkins) supports the safeguarding at St Thomas' (see page 1) the PSR (also known as the 'Parish Safeguarding Officer' or PSO) for St Thomas' & Holy Trinity is Martyn Whittock & at St John's is Jean Covington.**

If the report involves an allegation about another member of staff, the person making the report should be asked to write a brief report for a factual statement in the child, young person or vulnerable adult's own words. These reports should be confined to facts. They should not include any opinion, interpretation or judgement.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010) states: 'As appropriate, churches, other places of worship and faith organisations should report all allegations against people who work with children to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) ...'

A LADO provides advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations where there has been an allegation of abuse against a worker; liaising with the police and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly and consistently through the use of a fair and thorough process.

The Parish Safeguarding Representative should be satisfied that (in so far as they are personally able to ensure this) any child, young person or vulnerable adult concerned has been removed from any possible risk or harm.

Safeguarding investigations into abuse require very careful management. They can be complex and require particular experience and expertise and, wherever practicable, should be undertaken by professional workers who are specialists in this field. The Parish Safeguarding Representative must consult and take the advice of the Police/Social Services. The Parish Safeguarding Representative should not set up any investigation – the professional bodies will take such actions. Advice should also be sought from the Police/Social Services regarding informing the child or young person's parents/carers or the vulnerable adult's parents or carer.

Reports that have been requested and collated by the Parish Safeguarding Representative must, as soon as possible, be handed to the Police/Social Services with copies to the Vicar.

All information shall be dealt with confidentially and shared only with the people who need to or who must know. Parents/carers should be supported and guided by the Church and by the Social Services Child Protection Team.

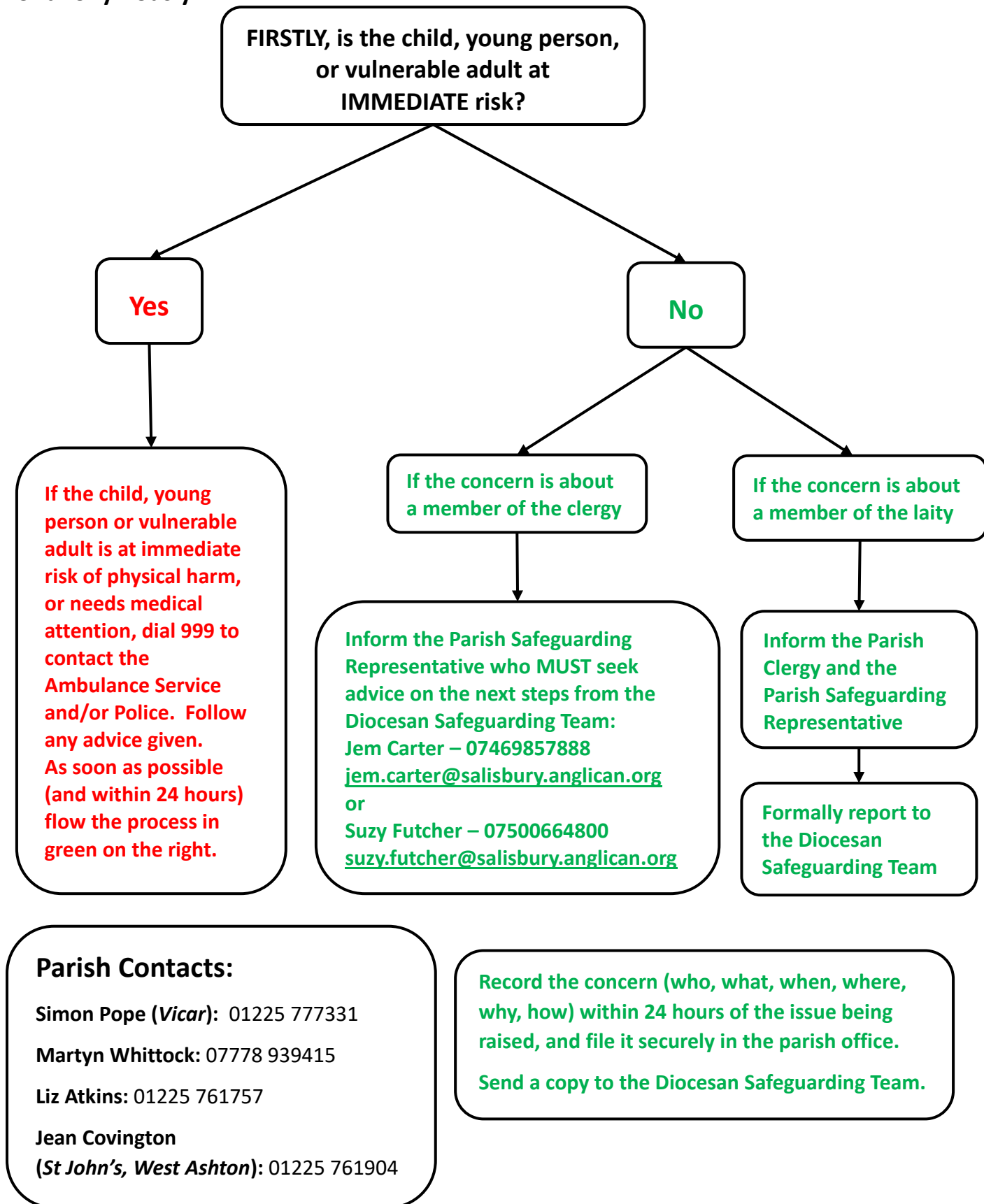
Any referral should be confirmed in writing within 48 hours and you should expect an acknowledgement of your written referral within one working day of receiving it.

If the Parish Safeguarding Representative or member of the clergy is not contactable, or they are the subject of the concerns, the statutory agencies should be contacted as outlined below.

- You can ring **Children Social Care** via Wiltshire Council's Customer Service Centre and ask to speak to the Initial Contact Team: **0300 4560108** (or **0845 6070888** out of hours)
- In the case of a vulnerable adult, call **Wiltshire Adult Care Services** on **0300 456 0111**.
- Or there are report forms on the **Wiltshire.gov** website
- You can also speak to the **Diocesan Safeguarding Officers**:
 - Jem Carter (Tuesday to Friday inclusive and on call Wednesday and Thursday evenings until 9.00pm 07469 857888, jem.carter@salisbury.anglican.org) or
 - Suzy Fatcher (Monday to Thursday inclusive and on call Monday and Tuesday evenings until 9.00pm, 07500 664800, suzy.fatcher@salisbury.anglican.org)
- **Public Protection Unit (Wiltshire Police)** 999 for urgent matters or 101 for non-urgent)
- **NSPCC** 0800 800 5000
- **Childline** 0800 1111

Safeguarding Flowchart: What to do, by whom and by when

A safeguarding concern is reported or identified by someone within the parish or anonymously.



Appendix 1: Diocese of Salisbury 'Domestic Abuse Policy'



Diocese of Salisbury Domestic Abuse Policy

All forms of domestic abuse are wrong and must stop. We are committed to promoting and supporting safer environments which:

- ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse;
- work to protect those experiencing domestic abuse;
- recognise equality amongst people and within relationships;
- refuse to condone any form of abuse;
- enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to openly and consistently.

We recognise that:

- all forms of domestic abuse cause damage to the survivor and express an imbalance of power in the relationship;
- all survivors (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- domestic abuse can occur in all communities;
- domestic abuse may be a single incident, but is usually a systematic repeated pattern which escalates in severity and frequency;
- domestic abuse, if witnessed or overheard by a child, is a form of abuse by the perpetrator of the abusive behaviour;
- working in partnership with children, adults and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of any child or adult suffering abuse.

We will respond to domestic abuse:

In all our activities by –

- valuing, listening to and respecting both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse, whilst appreciating the need to ensure a distance is kept between the two and refusing to condone the perpetration or continuation of any form of abuse.

In our publicity by –

- raising awareness about other agencies, support services, resources and expertise, through providing information in public and women-only areas of relevance to survivors, children and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

When concerns are raised by –

- ensuring that those who have experienced abuse can find safety and informed help;
- working with the appropriate statutory bodies during an investigation into domestic abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community.

In our care by –

- ensuring that informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse;
- identifying and outlining the appropriate relationship of those with pastoral care responsibilities with both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and procedures regularly.

Appendix 2: Diocese of Salisbury 'Offender Management Policy'



Policy for Incumbents and Priests in Charge (from 1 June 2016)

Background

Every person who chooses to be part of church has a different background. Some will have been convicted or received a caution at some point in their lives, others may have been alleged to, or have actually, caused harm to a child or vulnerable adult but not been charged with an offence.

Everyone is welcome in Church. But because such a broad cross section of people comes together, there are times when particular arrangements are needed to ensure that everyone is as safe as they can be.

An individual may be sorry for their previous actions. They may come to church seeking acceptance or forgiveness. We must remember that it is not for us to forgive; that is for the victim to do. And we must remember that whilst everyone deserves our support; we support best by recognising people's challenges, limitations and failings as well as their gifts. And then by doing all that we can to prevent circumstances arising in which a person can cause harm again.

The Church of England Safeguarding policies call for 'an agreement' to be formed where someone has a background that indicates that they could present a risk to others and they wish to become a part of church or to remain a part of a church where the allegation arises where they are already part of a congregation.

Where an allegation is raised against an individual but has not yet been investigated, a voluntary agreement forms a way of protecting both the congregation and the individual from circumstances arising in which further harm could occur or further accusations may be made.

Information about an individual can become known in a number of ways: The individual may offer this information willingly. The individual may have an allegation raised against them which the church knows about either because it arose within church or because statutory authorities inform us of it.

Where an individual is convicted or receives a caution the offence may be disclosed to the church under public protection arrangements.

Where information becomes known, this must be reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. The individual will be invited to enter into an 'agreement' with the church that they attend. If they attend more than one church more than one agreement may be needed.

The intention of the agreement is to be two way. The church states what pastoral support can be provided and the individual agrees to behaviour guidelines and boundaries intended to reduce the risk of harm to congregation members and to support the individual not to behave in a way that may harm others or give rise to concern that others may be being harmed.

Where the individual lives in the parish, the advice of the Registrar should be sought if the individual does not consent to an agreement. Where an individual does not consent to signing an agreement the parish reserves the right to take appropriate steps to fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities.

In the case of a conviction or caution for a sexual offence (including internet offences) an individual may have a 'Sexual Offences Prevention Order' (SOPO) which details specific boundaries for the individual. Breaching the order may be a criminal offence. An agreement can assist in supporting an individual not to breach a SOPO or any other court order in place.

The process: The process will be managed in accordance with 'Practice Guidance: Risk Assessment for individuals who may pose risk to children or adults' June 2015. A risk assessment will be completed by the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. This will involve information being gathered from the individual, the church and any statutory agencies working with that person e.g. police, probation, social services.

The DSA or a member of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team must be involved in the drafting of the agreement.

A group will be identified to monitor the agreement. The role of group members is to ensure that the agreement is adhered to, challenge and report any breach and also support the individual in keeping to the agreement terms. The group should include those with a need to know about the individual's history and those that will provide support to the individual. This will usually include: Incumbent; Church wardens; Parish Safeguarding Officer/s; and where appropriate leads for youth ministry, pastoral team, other ministers. Where the individual is involved in particular activity within the church the leader of that activity should be included. Any person identified to specifically provide pastoral support.

The individual should be made aware that should a group member step down from their role, the new post holder will usually take their place in the group.

Care will need to be taken where family relationships or close friendships are involved e.g. it would not be appropriate for a Parish Safeguarding Representative to be involved in an agreement for their spouse. Who will be involved in the group should be discussed with the individual so that they have the opportunity to raise any concerns before information is shared. It must be made clear to group members that information about the individual should not be shared outside of the group since that information will be confidential.

Discussion should be held with the individual about whether the congregation should know about their history. Sharing that information may place some offenders at risk and so information must only be shared with the individual's consent or following discussion with statutory authorities.

The risk assessment will be used to put together an agreement between the individual and the named group within the church who will support and monitor the agreement. This will include specific points such as: not taking up any position of trust e.g. PCC member, churchwarden, server; not attending any activity aimed at children and/or vulnerable adults; declining hospitality where there are children and/or vulnerable adults present; not being alone on church premises. The points will be tailored to the individual and church's specific circumstances.

The agreement will make clear what will happen if the agreement is breached e.g. that police and/or probation will be informed, the individual may not be accepted to attend particular activities.

In putting together the agreement attention will be paid not only to immediate safety issues but also to the prevention of grooming. Because of this points in an agreement will often focus on reducing the possibility of relationships and trust being built between the individual and at risk groups.

A proportion of group members will be PCC members by virtue of their role. Therefore whether the whole PCC knows of the agreement and or the individual's name is dependent on whether the individual consents to this and whether there is a risk based reason for this information to be shared. It is recognised that PCC membership changes regularly in some parishes and that identifying the individual to the whole PCC can result in a broad cross section of people knowing about their circumstances. It is also recognised that some offenders will be vulnerable and identifying them may place them at risk. On rare occasions a decision may be made not to inform the PCC of an agreement but this should be rare and based on a risk assessment. Usually the PCC will be informed that an agreement is in place and of when reviews have taken place so that they can be assured that the agreement is being appropriately managed. This enables the PCC to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. The agreement must be reviewed regularly. Within 6 months for the first review and then at least annually or more often if required. A review should be called if group members join or if there is a breach of the agreement or change in circumstances of the individual which affects the agreement. A review will also be called as the parish moves into vacancy or when a new Incumbent PiC arrives. The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser must always be invited to reviews.

The agreement should remain in place until the individual leaves the congregation. It does not end when a sentence or licence ends as the individual may continue to present a risk to others and to be in need of support in the long term. Should it become apparent that an individual who has an agreement is attending another church or community organisation where their past is not known; the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should be informed. This information will be discussed with statutory authorities and the information shared with the new church or community organisation where sufficient risk exists to make this necessary.

Appendix 3: Policy for use of photographs and video recordings

Diocesan responsibilities for safeguarding and the protection of children/young people/vulnerable adults require that an assessment is made about whether publishing a photograph or video recording in any format might pose a risk to a child/young person/vulnerable adult.

Good practice guidelines for photography or video recording at church events

Do not use a personal phone to take or store photographs.

Use a consent form as a matter of course for all groups and events at the same time as you collect contact details, permission slips or registration forms.

If it is impractical to ask all people at an event to sign a consent form (e.g. at most church services which are open to the public), put the Notice about Photographs or Video Recording (see below) in prominent places or in the event programme and on the premises, and make sure official photographers and video recorders are aware of these guidelines.

You may also want to read the text of the Notice out in any notices: do not photograph or video record any child/young person /vulnerable who has asked not to be photographed or who is under court order (where it is known). All children/young people/vulnerable adults must be appropriately dressed when photographed or video recorded.

All people taking photographs or video recording footage for official use at the event should register with the event organiser. All concerns regarding inappropriate behaviour or intrusive photography or video recording should be reported to the event organiser.

At large events, set up photo or video recording opportunities at the end. This allows the performance to go ahead with limited interruption and allows any child/young person/vulnerable adult to take part in the event but not to be photographed or video recorded.

At services relating to 'life events' such as weddings, christenings, etc., if there is no commercial photographer contracted, ask those being married/baptised/etc or their families to provide a designated photographer. The official or designated photographer can be briefed on photography guidelines before the event. This also cuts down on intrusive use of cameras or phones during an act of worship.

Guidance on use of photographic material in the parish, including the internet

Church websites must observe the safeguarding guidelines below and to regularly review the pages of their site so that it remains up to date, effective and safe.

Guidelines:

- Photographs and video recordings are deeply personal and must be used responsibly.
- Obtain consent as above from parents, guardians or carers before using photographs or video recordings of children, young people or adults at risk on a website.
- Children/young people/vulnerable adults who may be at risk should not be identified by their full name. Under no circumstances should the email, postal address or telephone numbers of children/young people/vulnerable adults be published.
- Ensure that the image files are appropriately named – do not use the names of children /young people/vulnerable adults who may be at risk in image filenames or Alt tags.
- Only use images of children/young people/vulnerable adults at risk in suitable dress.
- The use of inappropriate images should be reported through the standard procedures (statutory authorities and Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser) to reduce the risks to children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Events – Notice about Photographs and Video Recordings

It is possible that during this event a child/young person/vulnerable adult may be photographed or video recorded. The church will take all steps to ensure that these images are used solely for the purposes that they are intended.

If you become aware that these images are being used inappropriately you should inform an official as soon as possible. If you would prefer that a child, young person or adult at risk photograph or video recording is not taken please advise the organiser.

Signed:

Date:

Photographs and Video Recordings

Please note that it is not permitted for individuals to take photographs or video recordings during the course of any service/event in this church.

During some services/events an official photographer will be taking photographs and copies may be obtained from them. Their contact details will be made available.

You will be permitted to take photographs of family members at the end of the service/event.

Signed:

Incumbent/Churchwarden

Date:

Photographs and Video Recording Consent Form

The PCC takes the issue of safeguarding very seriously, and this includes the use of images of children/young people/vulnerable adults. We occasionally include images of children/young people/vulnerable adults in publications and on our website, but we have a duty of care which means that children/young people/vulnerable adults must remain unidentifiable, reducing the risk of inappropriate contact.

We ask that parents/guardians/carers consent to the church taking photographs and video recordings of children/young people/vulnerable adults.

Any use of images is underpinned by our Safeguarding Policy. The full name of a child/young person/vulnerable adult should never be included alongside an image.

Please complete, sign and return this form to the group leader

I consent to photographs or video recordings of the person named below, appearing in church printed publications or on the website.

I understand that the images will be used only for church purposes and that the identity of the person will be protected. I also acknowledge that the images may also be used in and distributed using other media.

Name of child/young person/vulnerable adult:

Name of parent/guardian/carer:

Address:

Signature:

Date: