

Safeguarding

Hello!

I am Patty Everitt the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) stepping into the shoes of the multi-talented Alan Craig.

The Purpose of Safeguarding

The purpose of safeguarding is to help churches create a safe place for everyone whether we meet them in church buildings or outside; to keep the vulnerable safe. It is worth remembering that we all, at one time or another, may be vulnerable, perhaps through illness, bereavement of difficult circumstances.

When we pay attention to what we say, and how we act toward others, we can create a safe place where everyone can feel: they belong rather than being marginalised; confident to contribute, not fearful of being exploited; respected not manipulated. Safeguarding is one important element of achieving this safe place.

The role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)

The PSO helps the church know how to act in ways that promote safety for all. This means making sure that we have safeguarding policies and procedures and monitoring how we use and act on them.

Part of the role is encouraging volunteers to undertake safeguarding training. I know you will be excited about this!

If you are a volunteer, you have probably already completed a "self-disclosure" form or even a DBS check.

The PSO receives and logs suspicions or allegations of abuse or safeguarding issues. Those of you who are or have been teachers, health workers or Youth workers will be very familiar with this process.

The PSO also reports annually on safeguarding matters to the PCC so that the church leadership knows what is happening and what to do next.



Getting up to speed as PSO

The Diocese provides some very good training for church leaders including Parish Safeguarding Officers and volunteers. Let me know if you are interested.

There is also a wealth of information to help Parishes on the Newcastle Diocese website, <https://www.newcastle.anglican.org/safeguarding/>

Fortunately for me there are some excellent documents to help me get into the role of PSO (sounds a bit like "method acting", doesn't it?): the Parish Audit Checklist and the Model Parish Safeguarding Checklist.

In Conclusion

Safeguarding is about a way of being that is safe for all. Our Parish safeguarding policies, procedures and training are there to make sure we protect the vulnerable whatever their age or circumstances.

If you would like to learn more about parish safeguarding or would be interested in attending any of the training then please do let me know!

Patty Everitt