

MERIDIAN BENEFICE

Safeguarding Statement for Children and Vulnerable Adults

The Meridian Benefice – the parish churches of Bluntisham-cum-Earith, Colne and Holywell-cum-Needingworth – is committed to safeguarding all those who attend the worship and other activities that we offer. We follow the House of Bishops' Policy, 'Protecting All God's Children' (2010), and the Diocese of Ely Policy and Procedures (2011). We seek to create a culture where everyone is included, respected, listened to, and taken seriously. We accept the prime duty of care for children and vulnerable adults, and have appointed a safeguarding co-ordinator to ensure that what we do is informed by up-to-date policies and procedures from local and national authorities.

Our parish safeguarding officers are:

Bluntisham-cum-Earith: **Mrs Debbie Rudwick** safeguarding.bluntisham@meridianbenefice.org.uk

Colne: **Mr Robert Major** safeguarding.colne@meridianbenefice.org.uk

Holywell-cum-Needingworth: **Dr Carole Mills** safeguarding.holywell@meridianbenefice.co.uk

We follow recommended safeguarding practice in recruiting, training and supporting our ordained and lay ministers, our employees and our volunteers. Recruitment includes Criminal Records Bureau checks for those working regularly or substantially with children and/or vulnerable adults. Health and safety policies are in place and we have provided adequate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the parish. All those working on behalf of the parish have agreed to comply with the safeguarding policy and with the good practice guidelines for their work.

We respond without delay to any complaint that a child or vulnerable adult in our care may have been harmed by the behaviour of an employee or volunteer working on behalf of the church. We always seek advice on such matters from outside this church, and we will co-operate with statutory agencies during any enquiries they need to make into allegations against a member of the church community. During those enquiries we will do our best to ensure that those making an allegation, and those against whom an allegation is made, are supported appropriately.

We seek to offer informed pastoral care and support to any child or adult whose life has been affected by abuse, whether the abuse was recent or long ago. Where there is a current risk to vulnerable people that has not yet been brought to light, we support the person who has suffered abuse in taking information to the appropriate agencies.

This church wishes to welcome and support all members of its community. Those who have a history of offences against children or vulnerable adults, and/or who may pose a risk to them are offered a supportive agreement to help them take part in church life; they are supported pastorally, and boundaries are set to protect those who might be vulnerable within the church. Confidential safeguarding agreements are the responsibility of the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser and the incumbent, who work together.

We regularly review and update our safeguarding policy, and we welcome comments from those using our services on how we could improve our awareness and safeguarding practices.

The next review of this policy is due in **March 2020**.