

THE PARISH OF CENTRAL EXETER

Agenda for the Special Meeting of the Parochial Church Council with subject of Safeguarding 2.30pm on Thursday 27th February 2025 in St Stephen's church

Present: Claire Mayer, Betsy Allen, Richard Skinner, Jessica Claridge, Revd Sheila Swarbrick, Keith Walton, Viv Asher, Mary Keaney (PCC sec/Parish safeguarding rep)

Apologies: Helen Evans & Celia Smith

1. **Welcome:** Mary welcomed everyone to the meeting which had been postponed from January.

2. **Safeguarding led by Mary:**

2.1 Promoting a Healthy and Safe Culture: The meeting discussed strengths and weaknesses of the church culture using the Safeguarding Worksheet 1A. It was felt that 'people do not have anxiety or fear about raising concerns'. This is a strength because the parish is a smaller group than it was. If there were difficulties the parish wouldn't be able to function as it does. It was agreed that 'Those in the Church Body support each other through difficult times'. Although as St Stephen's is not a neighbourhood church it is difficult to pop in on someone to offer support. Therefore, pastoral care can be a challenge. People felt that the parish is self-reflective and clerical deference is not a concern. One weakness noted was the danger of cliques forming amongst the congregation. This is less obvious due to a smaller congregation but something to be aware of. It was wondered if a leaflet drop to the surrounding area would generate interest in church attendance.

Actions to promote a safe, compassionate and healthy church culture within the church: For the congregation to be aware of anyone new attending a service and staying for coffee to make them welcome. This is to be a whole congregation objective and by its nature will be ongoing.

The PCC has discussed how they can better promote a healthy and safe church culture. This is to be reviewed every 3 years.

2.2 Lone Working: The meeting looked at the guidance from the Code of Safer Working Practice and the Home Visiting Risk Assessment checklist. The PCC is complying with the Church of England's safeguarding guidance regarding lone working with vulnerable adults. This question will be reviewed in 2 years.

2.3 Appropriate Boundaries: The meeting discussed whether the PCC is complying with the Church of England's safeguarding guidance regarding appropriate boundaries with vulnerable adults. A point of interest was the sharing of the peace during the communion service. Some people enjoy sharing hugs, handshakes and some prefer not to touch. It was decided that at the next communion service a circle could be formed as a way of sharing the peace. It was also agreed that permission to share an individual's personal details must be given as everyone has the right to personal privacy. The PCC is complying with the Church of England's safeguarding guidance regarding appropriate boundaries with vulnerable adults. This question will be reviewed in 2 years.

2.4 Support for Victims and Survivors: The PCC have been made aware of the requirements to provide support to victims and survivors of abuse. This support may be locally arranged and in the form of therapeutic support, a support person, spiritual & pastoral support and a

formal apology. Centrally arranged support may be provided by Safe Spaces, the Interim Support Scheme or the Redress Scheme. This question will be reviewed every 2 years.

- 2.5 Information for Victims and Survivors:** The PCC are aware of the requirements to provide clear and accessible information for victims and survivors of abuse. The Diocese will be providing support to parishes on how to meet this requirement in the future. This question will be reviewed every 2 years.

3. A.O.B. None

- 4. Date and Place of next meeting:**
Wednesday 5th March 2025

The meeting closed at 3.45pm