



The Parish of Romsey And St Swithun's

Safeguarding Policy

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Contact details

Church Addresses

The Abbey Church of St Mary and St Ethelflaeda, Church Lane, Romsey, SO51 8EP
St Swithun's, Crampmoor, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 8EN

Parish Office

The Parish Office, Church Lane, ROMSEY, SO51 8EP
telephone: 01794 513125

Parish Safeguarding Officer

SARAH RILEY email: safeguarding@romseyabbey.org.uk mobile: 07986 662503

Foreword by the Vicar

The protection and nurture of vulnerable people in our community is critically important to our Christian mission. We strive together to follow the example of Christ in reaching out to all people, in all circumstances, with a special compassion for those who may have nobody else to speak up for them.

We have developed our Safeguarding policy to ensure that Romsey Abbey is following the best possible practice in our work with children, young people and adults who may be at risk of harm. It has been put together using both expertise from within our own community and external advice. We have worked hard to make it a practical and useful tool for the large number of volunteers who assist with this work.

I commend our Safeguarding Policy to you and hope that it will be a helpful support to all those engaged in this important work and will ensure that we protect both the children and adults who may be at risk of harm in our community effectively.



Revd. Canon Thomas Wharton
Vicar of Romsey

1.Safeguarding Policy

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy the PCC of Romsey Abbey with St Swithun's Crampmoor is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Parish will:

- Create a safe and caring place for all.
- Have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately.
- Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- Care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

Each person who works within our church community will agree to abide by this policy and the safeguarding guidelines established by the Parish.

The PCC appoints **Sarah Riley** as the Parish Safeguarding Officer

1 Domestic Abuse and Violence Policy

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

- Ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse
- Protect those vulnerable to domestic abuse from actual or potential harm
- Recognise equality amongst people and within relationships
- 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 child 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 endeavour to respond to domestic abuse by:

- **In all our activities:**
 - Valuing, listening to and respecting both survivors and perpetrators of domestic abuse
- **In our publicity:**
 - 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 perpetrators of domestic abuse
- **When concerns are raised:**
 - 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:**
 - 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 perpetrators of domestic abuse.

2 Recruitment of ex-Offenders Policy

1. As an organisation which assesses applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the Parish of Romsey complies fully with the DBS code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly -
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>
2. The Parish undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any person subject of a criminal record check based on a conviction or other information revealed
3. The Parish can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that the Parish of Romsey are legally entitled to know about, where a DBS certificate at either Standard or Enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended)
4. The Parish can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not 'protected'
5. The Parish is committed to the fair treatment of its staff (paid and voluntary), potential staff/officers or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, age, physical/mental disability or offending background (subject to points 3,4 and 11).
6. The Parish will make this written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, available to all applicants at the start of the recruitment process
7. The Parish actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records
8. The Parish select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience (excepting where there is an 'occupational requirement' as laid out under the terms of the Equality Act 2010)
9. An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, role/job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being considered for the position
10. The Parish ensures that those who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences under the guidance of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team

11. Any disclosure of a caution or conviction, whether for a serious violent and/or sexual offence or a conviction resulting in a custodial offence (whether or not suspended), or other intelligence information disclosed, will be referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team for an initial assessment and they will consult as appropriate with the individual responsible for the recruitment process as to whether the disclosure may affect suitability for the role.
12. At interview, or in a separate discussion, the Parish ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment
13. The Parish makes every person subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the code of practice <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice> , and makes a copy available on request
14. The Parish undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
15. The Parish will apply this policy to employed/paid and volunteer roles.

3 Equal Opportunity Policy

The Parish is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff, volunteers and users of its services regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical or mental disability or offending background. We actively promote equal opportunity for all, including those with criminal records. In selecting people we assess their skills, qualifications and experience

4 Purpose of these policies

4.1 Why we have a policy

- To safeguard, care for and nurture the children and adults who may be at risk of harm that are part of our church community.
- To inform those who are involved with this work of the behaviour that is expected of them.
- To protect members of the church who undertake this work from false or malicious accusations of abuse

This policy should be read alongside the Safer Recruitment and People Management Policy which sets out the procedures for appointing both voluntary and paid workers to work with children or with adults who may be at risk of harm.

4.2 Definition of terms

For the purposes of this Safeguarding Policy, all references to:

- *'child', 'children', 'young person', 'young people'*, – whether singular or plural – are used interchangeably and are taken to refer to those under 18 years of age.
- *'workers', 'staff', 'volunteers', 'helpers'* are used interchangeably and are taken to refer to anyone interacting with others on behalf of The Church
- *'abuse'* refers to any of the recognised forms of abuse –
 - Physical
 - Domestic violence or abuse
 - Sexual
 - Psychological/emotional
 - Financial/material
 - Modern slavery
 - Discriminatory
 - Organisational/institutional
 - Neglect or acts of admission
 - Self-neglect
- A *'vulnerable adult'* is “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”

Some of the factors that increase vulnerability include:

- a sensory or physical disability or impairment;
 - a learning disability;
 - a physical illness;
 - mental ill health (including dementia), chronic or acute;
 - an addiction to alcohol or drugs;
 - the failing faculties in old age;
 - a permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events, for example bereavement or previous abuse or trauma.
- *'DBS'* is the Disclosure and Barring Service which carries out criminal record checks. It was established when the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) merged in 2012.

5 Safeguarding Responsibilities

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is responsible with the Vicar for ensuring the wellbeing of children and adults who may be at risk of harm in the church community. It will do this through adopting effective policies and procedures and by appointing appropriate people to carry out safeguarding responsibilities in the parish. It will review the operation of these policies and procedures to ensure that they are effective.

The Vicar is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding is embedded in the work of the Parish. He will ensure that a safeguarding culture is adopted in all work with children and adults who may be at risk of harm. He will manage the consequences for the congregation after an allegation or a conviction has been made and will ensure pastoral care for all concerned is offered (victim, alleged abuser and families).

The Parish Safeguarding Officer has an overview of all involving children and vulnerable adults and keeps a record of these activities. They are familiar with the national and diocesan safeguarding guidance, attending training as necessary, and ensure that leaders of activities are fully aware of, and are implementing, this guidance. They liaise with the incumbent and leaders of activities offering advice and support on safeguarding matters. They liaise with the Diocesan Safeguarding team, implementing Diocesan requirements in the Parish and reporting concerns and allegations to them. They report to the PCC at least annually. They promote safeguarding and inclusiveness in the Parish, ensuring that this policy and contact details are displayed in the Parish and on the website. They promote and arrange safeguarding training in the Parish and keep secure records of safeguarding issues and safeguarding training undertaken.

The Parish Safeguarding Administrator is responsible for collating the results of the Safer Recruitment process (application forms, results of DBS checks and references), recording information and working with the Parish Safeguarding Officer to confirm appointments.

Everyone in the Parish, paid staff or volunteers, working with children, young people or adults or risk of harm must follow safeguarding procedures and report any concerns or suspicions that an individual is at risk or may have been harmed

6 Responding to allegations of abuse

Anyone who has any concerns or suspicions about the possibility that a child or adult who may be at risk of harm may have been harmed or may be at risk of harm must contact the Vicar or the Parish Safeguarding Officer. They will inform the appropriate authorities including the Diocesan Director of Safeguarding. All serious allegations will be reported to the police.

If the person with concerns is unable to contact the Parish authorities or has any reasons why they feel that this is not appropriate, they should contact the Diocesan Director of Safeguarding directly and/or the relevant Statutory Authorities.

7 “Whistleblowing” policy

Any individual, whether a member of the Abbey community or the wider public, who raises concerns regarding a child or vulnerable adult will be treated with respect and their concerns taken seriously. Such persons will not be viewed as trouble makers or treated with suspicion. All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if that is your wish. If disciplinary or other proceedings follow the investigation, it may not be possible to take action as a result of your disclosure without your help, so you may be asked to come forward as a witness. If you agree to this, you will be offered advice and support.

Whistleblowers are encouraged to put their name to allegations whenever possible otherwise it is more difficult for us to protect their position or to give feedback. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but they may be considered at the discretion of Vicar and Safeguarding Officer who will take into account the seriousness of the issue, the credibility of the concern and whether the allegation can be corroborated from other sources.

8 Positions of trust

It should be noted that in legal terms the Position of Trust has a clear definition – but is used here in a more general context.

All those who work with children and young people or who have significant contact with them and their families on behalf of the Church are in positions of trust. The Parish has the following expectation of those who are in Positions of Trust

- They will be seen as role models by the children with whom they are in contact at all times, including when they are off duty;
- All church workers should, therefore, conduct themselves in accordance with the reasonable expectations of someone who represents the Church;
- They should take care to observe appropriate boundaries between their work and their personal life. For example, they should ensure that all communications they may have with or about children and young people are appropriate in their tone; they should seek advice immediately if they come across a child or young person who may have been harmed (including self-harm) or a colleague whose conduct appears inappropriate;
- They should not expose themselves or others to material which is sexually explicit, profane, obscene, harassing, fraudulent, racially offensive, politically inflammatory, defamatory, or in violation of any British, European or international law.

It is contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Amended 2022) for those in a Position of Trust, including priests, youth workers and anyone who is teaching, training, supervising or instructing others, to have sexual or inappropriate personal relationships with those aged 16 or 17 for whom they are responsible. A breach of this is likely to be considered as a criminal offence.

Anyone found guilty of a criminal or disciplinary offence of this kind will be dismissed and referred to the DBS for possible barring.

9 Hire of premises

Anyone hiring our premises, including the Church Rooms, must ensure that children, young people and adults who may be at risk of harm are protected at all times by taking all reasonable steps to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring, and that they carry full liability insurance for this.

The hiring body should abide by their own child protection or safeguarding policy if they have one and sign a copy of our Safeguarding Addendum.

For one-off bookings, the hirers are not expected to obtain DBS disclosures for leaders.

For regular bookings the group's safeguarding policy must at least meet the requirements of the Parish safeguarding policy and sign a copy of our Safeguarding Addendum. The responsibility for implementing a safeguarding policy rests with the hiring organisation.

Any group that intends to care for children under 8 years for 2 hours or more without their parents or carers present may need to register under the Children Act 1989 with the Local Authority. No booking with such a group will be accepted until evidence of its Ofsted registration has been produced, if it is required. It is the hirer's responsibility to register with Ofsted, but they may need to work with the PCC in order to address any premises requirements raised by Ofsted.

If we are informed of allegations or concerns in the context of groups or individuals who hire our premises, we will follow the procedures for responding as defined in our Safeguarding Policy, working in partnership with the group's own procedures.

When allegations are made in good faith and reasonably believed to be true but which are not confirmed by investigation, we will recognise the whistle-blowers concern and they have nothing to fear. If allegations are made frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, appropriate action may be taken.

10 Contact information

10.1 Church authorities

The Vicar Revd Canon Thomas Wharton, 01794 513125 (office),
07796 104800 (emergencies)

Parish Safeguarding Officer Sarah Riley, 07986 662503,
safeguarding@romseyabbey.org.uk

Parish Safeguarding Admin Pam Leech, safeguarding.admin@romseyabbey.org.uk

Diocesan Safeguarding Manager Jackie Rowlands, 01962 737317 or 07921 865374,
safeguarding@winchester.anglican.org

10.2 Statutory Authorities

Police	Emergency	999
	Non-emergency	101
Hampshire County Council Children's Services	Daytime	0300 555 1384
	Out of hours	0300 555 1373
Hampshire County Council Adult Services	Daytime	0300 555 1386
Domestic Abuse Helpline		0808 2000 247
NSPCC Child Protection Line		0808 800 5000
Childline		0800 1111