

Otley Parish Church Safeguarding report for ACPM Sunday May 17th 2026

First of all ----- a VERY big thank you to everyone who works in a volunteer role at OPC ---- our baptism co coordinator - in Baby and Little Rascals, House group leaders, the choir and Activate services – at Open House, our Pastoral group, the church bell ringers, Sunday club, Youth groups, Messy church, Alpha, prayer ministry ---- with Craftynuts craft group, our flower arrangers, Ladies fellowship and Local to Global and of course all the members of our PCC including the church warden and the assistant church wardens – a body in excess of 70 people!

All new volunteers now need to apply for their role – references are taken up and I ‘interview’ each person. For many we need to apply for DBS (police checks), everyone has to complete regular safeguarding training, including that in relation to domestic abuse and everyone agrees and signs up to a Code of Conduct in relation to children and vulnerable adults.

On November 16th last year – along with many other churches throughout the country – we held our Safeguarding Sunday service with the theme ‘Actions speak louder than words’

This year the PCC and I have devised a Lone Working Policy for those who, for whatever reason are alone in the church building or visiting people in their homes or on ‘neutral territory’. I would encourage anyone who believes that they fall into this category to contact either myself or Barry Milner (PCC Secretary) for a copy.

Last year and during this year, I have been asking folk to complete Safeguarding questionnaires. In various forms this has gone out to Little and Baby Rascals, Open House, the youth groups (Friday and Sunday groups) Sunday club parents and in the last few weeks – to the whole Sunday service congregation. Responses to this last questionnaire have been possible to complete on line and on paper.

I can report that almost universally people who attend the various groups at OPC – on a Sunday and through the week – have felt safe, heard and respected and have felt confident that they could speak to a group leader or Aaron about any issues or difficulties.

Responses from the whole church have been coming in more recently. These indicate a more mixed feedback – issues of which are being addressed by the PCC and with the support of our Bishop – Arun.

If you cast a glance at the church notice boards throughout the building and in The Chestnuts or log onto the church website – you will find information, contact details for myself, the diocesan safeguarding advisors and details of where to go for further safeguarding information.

In terms of the future – I want to ensure that we develop a ‘safe and healthy culture’ at Otley Parish church where folk can feel confident that any safeguarding issues they have – either current or from the past – will be taken seriously and support offered. The PCC and I have been looking particularly about the issue of Domestic Abuse on which I have been attending additional training over and above that of the C of E mandatory training for volunteers. I hope we will be able to offer some whole church training for those interested, later in the year.

In any case, I hope that if you have safeguarding concerns - either for yourself or someone else – you could share these with myself, Aaron – a member of the pastoral group ---- or maybe as a starter – with your friend in the same pew or church group that you may attend.

Jenny Liston (Parish Safeguarding Officer)