THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

DIOCESE OF SALISBURY

Stour Vale Benefice

SAFEGUARDING

POLICY

Safeguarding Officer:- Jeremy Stanford*

Frys Farm, New Lane,

East Stour, Gillingham,

SP8 5NA

07766 071538

Date: 15th March 2025

*Alternatively you can contact the Diocesan Safeguarding team: safeguarding@salisbury.anglican.org to speak to a caseworker or Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor regarding safeguarding concerns or ongoing cases. Or 01722 438651 and press option 3.

For out of hours help: If your query is urgent or out of hours (5pm Friday to 10pm Sunday), please contact thirtyone:eight on 0303 0031111.
"Call 999 if a child or adult is in immediate danger of significant or serious harm"

Safeguarding Policy for the Stour Vale Benefice

This policy was agreed at a Stour Vale Benefice Meeting held in October 2017 and revised in 2018 and reviewed in September 2020 and revised in March 2023 with contact information updated March 2025.

The Church of England, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's recreation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

The Stour Vale Benefice is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable are paramount.

The Stour Vale Benefice recognises that none of us is invulnerable but that there is a particular care for those whose vulnerability is increased by situations, by disabilities or by reduction in capacities. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish our humanity and seeks to affirm the gifts and graces of all God's people.

This policy addresses the safeguarding of individuals. It is intended to be a dynamic policy. It is intended to support the Church in being a safe supportive and caring community for children, young people, adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect, for survivors of abuse, for communities and for those affected by abuse.

The Stour Vale Benefice recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children, and adults who may be at risk and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual or institutional abuse or neglect. It acknowledges the effects these may have on people and their development including spiritual and religious development. It accepts its responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe in its care and that their dignity and right to be heard is maintained. It accepts its responsibility to support, listen to and work for healing with survivors, offenders, communities and those who care about them. It takes seriously the issues of promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace. The Stour Vale Benefice commits itself to respond without delay to any

allegation or cause for concern that a child, or adult who may be at risk of abuse or neglect may have been harmed, whether in the church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.

The Stour Vale Benefice commits itself to the provision of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and adults.

The Stour Vale Benefice affirms and gives thanks for the work of those who are workers with children, and adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect and acknowledges the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding children and adults who are on our premises.

The Stour Vale Benefice appoints Jeremy Stanford as Parish Safeguarding Representative and supports his in his role which is to:

i) support and advise the Vicar, Licensed Lay Ministers and Lay Worship Leaders and Church Wardens in fulfilling their roles
ii) provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues
iii) promote safeguarding best practice within the Stour Vale benefice.

a) Purpose

The purposes of this safeguarding policy is to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about their roles and responsibilities regarding children, and adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect in our care and using our premises. To be read in conjunction with 'The Diocese of Salisbury Framework for Safeguarding and Good Practice'.

b) Good Practice

We believe good practice means that:

i) All people are treated with respect and dignity.
ii) Those who act on behalf of the Church should not meet or work alone with a child or adult who may be at risk of abuse or neglect where the activity cannot be seen unless this is necessary for pastoral reasons, in which case a written note of this will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit.
iii) The church premises will be assessed for safety for children, and adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect and the risk assessment report will be given annually to the Stour Vale Benefice in written form. This will include fire safety procedures. The

Stour Vale Benefice will consider the extent to which the premises and equipment are suitable or should be made more suitable.

iv) Any driver using their own vehicle for the transportation of children, or adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect is responsible for ensuring the vehicle is roadworthy and comprehensively insured. (Drivers to check with their Insurance Company re the requirement for business cover)

v) Promotion of safeguarding is recognised to include undertaking those tasks which enable all God's people to reach their full potential.

c) Appointment and training of LPAs and LWLs

LPAs and LWLs will be appointed after a Safer Recruitment process and completion of a safeguarding course at the appropriate level.

d) Pastoral visitors

In terms of safeguarding, Pastoral Visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of basic safeguarding training upon appointment.

d) Guidelines for working with children, young people and adults who may be at risk

The Guidelines exist and are reviewed annually. These are accessible to each worker with children and young people and adults who may be at risk of abuse, outlining good practice.

e) Events with church groups off the premises

Adequate staffing will be ensured for such events. Notification of the event will be given to the relevant PCC and approved by them in writing in advance.

f) Safeguarding Complaints procedure

A complaint may be made to the Parish Safeguarding Representative. If a complaint is made to another person, it should be passed on to the Parish Safeguarding Representative who will arrange to meet with the complainant and attempt to resolve the complaint. If the complaint cannot be resolved orally the complaints procedure of the Church of England will be invoked.

g) Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Stour Vale Benefice.

h) Key concepts and definitions:

i) Adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect: any adult who

(a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs),

(b) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and

(c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

ii) Safeguarding and protecting children or adults who may be at risk: preventing maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.

iii) Adult/child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.

iv) Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, in a community and in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child or adult or by strangers; by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

……Church Warden for the parish of……

Date …… 2025

Revd Clare Dean …… Vicar of The Stour Vale Benefice