

Safeguarding Report 2025

Background

As always: **“Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility”**

Safeguarding is managed at Benefice level, currently by Judy Gold from Chilton Parish and Sue Greatbanks from Harwell Parish. Both Safeguarding Officers have continued to work together and regularly meet to discuss progress and future action necessary to continue our service in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy, an updated copy of which is submitted hereto for approval and signature. This will be loaded onto the website and annually reviewed.

DBS Checks

You will all now be aware that our former provider for DBS applications, APCS suffered a data breach in August last year. No volunteers in Chilton were affected but unfortunately a few volunteers in Harwell were affected. As a result of this data breach and under guidance from Church House, and with approval from both PCCs we are to change our provider to Verifile Ltd.

Until now we have continued with DBS applications for new volunteers and carried out renewal applications for volunteers whose certificates have expired. However we must wait now until Adoption Agreements for each parish appointing Verifile as our new provider are approved and signed by the PCCs. These will then be sent to Church House who wish to have sight of them.

We understand that every DBS application to Verifile will incur a charge of £5.99 for volunteers and to keep our costs as low as possible we want to stress the importance of the Update Service. This is a government organisation with a national record of all DBS certificates. Once an individual is registered with them (and registration is free for volunteers) each volunteer will be contacted by them every three years and invited to renew their DBS for a further three years free of charge.

Finally both Sue and Judy will need training on the Verifile system

Children’s and Families Worker

We are very pleased there is a possibility of a new Children’s and Families Worker being appointed soon. Currently there is no such person in either parish and both Harwell and Chilton are very encouraged to hear there has been this interest.

The Children’s Interactive Services in both villages have been very successful and we praise the time and effort given by volunteers to plan and produce these events and make them so well attended.

We also welcome the All Age services starting again in Church as again these were well staged and appealed to the whole congregation

Training

Safeguarding training should be completed every three years by PCC members and volunteers working with children. We are pleased to report that this is generally up to date and is something we need to monitor. Since last year it has been mandatory for all bellringers to attend the online Basic Awareness course and we have advised both head bell ringers of this.

The safeguarding programme 'I Know Safeguarding' has recently been purchased by our Church which will enable us to record any safeguarding incidents that might arise. Both Sue and Judy need more training on the package before being able to use it fully.

Dashboard

In accordance with Level 3 of the Dashboard the PCC members need to approve annually an up-to-date Action Plan setting out safer activities and safer practices. A draft copy has been supplied to us by the Diocese and will be presented later for consideration.

Any Church member who would like to view the Safeguarding Dashboard please contact Judy Gold on jgold2@btinternet.com or Sue Greatbanks on suegbs48@gmail.com

Pastoral Care

We understand that pastoral care teams under their leaders are working very well in both villages.

Judy Gold and Sue Greatbanks

Safeguarding Officers for St Matthews Harwell and All Saints Chilton - March 2026