

Safeguarding Report for the APCM 2026

Safeguarding in the Church of England has continued to be in the news this year with several members of the clergy facing investigation and with the church moving towards a more independent safeguarding structure. At St Mary's, we continue to strive to maintain a safe environment for the church community and, in particular, for children and vulnerable adults. The role of the Safeguarding Officer is to be the named person to whom any concerns relating to children or vulnerable adults, can be made.

Information about safeguarding and contact details are on the church noticeboard and on St Mary's Leigh section of the 'A Church Near You' website. (If you search for St Mary's church Leigh, it will appear near the top of the page.) Gill Bennie is invaluable in conducting db's checks (criminal record checks) and ensuring that PCC members and other volunteers are up to date on their safeguarding training. We would like to thank all of you who have provided the necessary information for the db's checks and for completing your safeguarding training. Gill and I are in contact regularly to catch up on any safeguarding changes/areas of concern and training issues.

At St Mary's, we have clear procedures in place and a culture where ensuring children and vulnerable adults are safe, is a key priority and taken seriously. We want to make sure that we are a church where people are able to speak out about any concerns they have and where any concerns are dealt with in a professional manner, with no covering up or matters being brushed under the carpet.

The PCC of St Mary's (consisting of the churchwardens, Deanery Synod members and elected members) has a duty of care to ensure the protection of the vulnerable in their church community. The PCC has complied with the duty to have 'due regard' to the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance. All safeguarding policies are updated and approved as required, the main policy on responding to safeguarding concerns or allegations, was last approved in July 2025.

Safeguarding is a standing item on the agenda of each PCC meeting. We also make use of the Church Dashboard which is an online tool, that helps to keep track of safeguarding in the church and provides updates on local and national changes in safeguarding requirements.

Through safer recruitment practices, we try to make it as difficult as possible for an inappropriate person to take up a position in the church and we regularly risk assess activities to try and identify and reduce risks.

I am pleased to report that no safeguarding concerns have been raised during the year. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and we need to maintain our vigilance to ensure the protection and well-being of everyone in our community. I am always willing to be asked for advice around any concerns people may have and to chat things through.

Lisa Srotyr
Parish Safeguarding Officer