

Table Downham Market

Safeguarding Report

Table ACM Sunday 20th June 2021

Safeguarding Officer: Ben Molyneux-Hetherington

Table has complied with its duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Church Council has adopted Promoting a Safer Church as one of its policy documents, as well as utilising model policies recommended by the House of Bishops.

Table has progressed to the point where we have all the necessary Safeguarding policies in place, and procedures are being followed to promote safeguarding within the church. Please see Appendix A for further details. Table procedures and actual practice all meet, and often exceed, the recommendations given by the Church of England. Safeguarding is a standing item on the Church Council agenda, and is discussed regularly. Within this, recruitment of volunteers is also discussed to ensure that Safer Recruitment is taking place. There is also now a policy review schedule, meaning Church Council reviews every policy and procedure we have adopted yearly. This review is both to confirm we remain happy with the policy, and also to discuss how it is being implemented in practice and what improvements can be made. Safeguarding information is clearly displayed at Church and on our website, and there are additional guides readily available for reference at all events we run.

The only area of any concern is that the current Safeguarding Officer is married to the church leader. As such, we signpost to the Ely Safeguarding team on safeguarding literature so people are aware that they can contact this team if an allegation involves Sarah or Ben, directly or indirectly. In the long term, we hope to appoint another person to this role should a suitable person join the council. However, for now we feel we have adequately accounted for this issue to continue until such a time as a suitable person can be appointed.

The NSPCC defines Safeguarding (as relating to children) as follows:

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding means:

- *protecting children from abuse and maltreatment*
- *preventing harm to children's health or development*
- *ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care*
- *taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.*

We have now reached the end of the first phase of Table's safeguarding journey - we have the policies and procedures in place to fulfil all our legal and ecclesial obligations, and they are being followed through in practice. The next step is to embed safeguarding widely across the church, in our culture, identity, theology and practice. Safeguarding is not simply preventing abuse and responding to allegations or events appropriately, it is also ensuring that promoting the welfare of everyone who comes into contact with the church is of paramount importance. With this in mind, how we run services, the beliefs we communicate, and even how we talk to one another all need to be considered as part of safeguarding. This is a whole church responsibility, but the Safeguarding Officer and Church Leader will take a particular lead in encouraging and developing this. It is also important to note that, in many ways, safeguarding is already a part of our Church culture.

Over the next year, we will continue to fulfil our basic safeguarding obligations and responsibilities, and maintain the good foundation we have put in place. We will also look to develop our church so that promoting the welfare of people is central to all we are and do.

TL;DR: Table has done all the basic Safeguarding stuff it needs to do, and is in a strong position. Now Table needs to work to make sure everyone who comes into contact with us is kept safe and is looked after, and that Table looks after everyone's health and wellbeing as best as we can.