



# Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust

## Supporting Wiltshire's Churches since 1953

Registered Charity Number 1075598

### **WILTSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

#### **Introduction**

At one time or another we are all vulnerable and may struggle to protect ourselves from harm caused by others. Everyone in the WHCT community has a responsibility for the safety, wellbeing and protection of all people within its area of activity.

Safeguarding is about preventing harm to children and adults at risk wherever possible and acting to promote their wellbeing - sometimes this will require the use of the child and adult protection systems to address concerns, make someone safer and bring an offender to justice.

This document sets out the Charity Commission guidance on Safeguarding and the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust (WHCT) Safeguarding Policy. WHCT policy and practice is also in accord with National Church and Diocese policy guidance and practice. The WHCT Safeguarding Policy<sup>1</sup> is reviewed annually by WHCT Trustees in November.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the WHCT Health and Safety Policy<sup>2</sup>, which focuses on the physical risks in Trust activities, appropriate risk mitigation and responsibility.

#### **Charity Commission Guidance**

Safeguarding is a key governance priority for all charities, not just those working with groups traditionally considered at risk.

The Charity Commission has four clear expectations of trustees:

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<sup>1</sup> Anne Doyle is the lead Trustee for WHCT Safeguarding and the sponsor of this policy.

<sup>2</sup> WHCT Health and Safety Policy dated 11 Nov 2024.

- provide a safe and trusted environment. Safeguarding involves a duty of care to everyone who comes into contact with your charity, not just vulnerable beneficiaries;
- set an organisational culture that prioritises safeguarding, so it is safe for people to report incidents and concerns in the knowledge they will be dealt with appropriately;
- have adequate safeguarding policies, procedures and measures to protect people and make sure these are made public, reviewed regularly and kept up to date;
- handle incidents as they arise. Report them to the relevant authorities including the police and the Charity Commission. Learn from these mistakes and put in place the relevant mechanisms to stop them happening again.

The Charity Commission's list of 10 actions for trustee boards is at Annex A. The WHCT Safeguarding Policy complies with all actions that are appropriate to Trust practices and events.

### **WHCT Safeguarding Policy**

Drawing on Charity Commission and church guidance, it is the responsibility of all members of WHCT to give paramount importance to the nurture and care of children and adults at risk in a safe and secure environment. It is about preventing harm to anyone who is always potentially at risk.

#### **We recognise that:**

- The welfare of children and adults at risk is paramount.
- Everyone has different levels of vulnerability and each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives
- All adults and young people (regardless of age, disability, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse which can occur in all families and communities.

#### **We will develop a culture in our Trust that:**

- Enables a safe and caring community to provide a loving environment where there is a culture of 'informed vigilance' as to the dangers of abuse.
- Enables and encourages concerns to be raised and responded to openly and consistently and protects children, young people and adults at risk who may be vulnerable from actual or potential harm.
- Ensures all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse.

- Values, listens to and respects children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable, encouraging them to be active contributors to the church community.
- Encourages adults who may be vulnerable to lead as independent a life as possible.

**When concerns are raised, we will:**

- Respond without delay to every concern raised that a child or adult at risk may have been harmed, or may be at risk of harm, through abuse or neglect.
- Work with police, local authority and other partners in any investigation, including where allegations are made against a member of WHCT.
- Challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.

**WHCT Reporting Procedure**

Concerns and incidents are to be reported as quickly as possible to Anne Doyle, as Trustee Safeguarding Lead, and Robert Eggar, as Secretary and registered Charity Commission contact<sup>3</sup>. They will decide on a course of action and any associated notification to the Police, Local Authorities and Charity Commission in consultation with the Chair of Trustees. The Secretary will keep an accurate confidential record of all concerns or incidents.

Signed:

Chair of WHCT Trustees

Date: 11th November 2024

Annex A: Charity Commission Guidance 2024 - 10 Actions Trustee Boards Need to Take to Ensure Good Safeguarding Governance.

**Annex A**

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<sup>3</sup> Email address published on the Trust website – [sec.whct@gmail.com](mailto:sec.whct@gmail.com)

## Charity Commission Guidance 2024:

**10 actions trustee boards need to take to ensure good safeguarding governance**  
Safeguarding should be a key governance priority for all charities

Ensure your charity has an adequate safeguarding policy, code of conduct and any other safeguarding procedures. Regularly review and update the policy and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose	Identify possible risks, including risks to your beneficiaries or to anyone else connected to your charity and any emerging risks on the horizon	Consider how to improve the safeguarding culture within your charity	Ensure that everyone involved with the charity knows how to recognise, respond to, report and record a safeguarding concern	Ensure people know how to raise a safeguarding concern
Regularly evaluate any safeguarding training provided, ensuring it is current and relevant	Review which posts within the charity can and must have a DBS check from the Disclosure and Barring Service	Have a risk assessment process in place for posts which do not qualify for a DBS check, but which still have contact with children or adults at risk	Periodically review your safeguarding policy and procedures, learning from any serious incident or 'near miss'	If you work overseas, find out what different checks and due diligence you need to carry out in different geographical areas of operation

 **CHARITY COMMISSION**  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Safeguarding should be a key governance priority for all charities

1. Ensure your charity has an adequate safeguarding policy, code of conduct and any other safeguarding procedures. Regularly review and update the policy and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose.
2. Identify possible risks, including risks to your beneficiaries or to anyone else connected to your charity and any emerging risks on the horizon.
3. Consider how to improve the safeguarding culture within your charity.
4. Ensure that everyone involved with the charity knows how to recognise, respond to, report and record a safeguarding concern.
5. Ensure people know how to raise a safeguarding concern.
6. Regularly evaluate any safeguarding training provided, ensuring it is current and relevant.

7. Review which posts within the charity can and must have a DBS check from the Disclosure and Barring Service.
8. Have a risk assessment process in place for posts which do not qualify for a DBS check, but which still have contact with children or adults at risk.
9. Periodically review your safeguarding policy and procedures, learning from any serious incident or 'near miss.'
10. If you work overseas, find out what different checks and due diligence you need to carry out in different geographical areas of operation.