

ELY DIOCESAN SYNOD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Ely Diocesan Synod held at Ely College on 14 June 2023 starting at 6.45pm

The meeting opened with worship led by the Bishop of Ely followed by the commissioning of: Mrs Cathy Watts (Warden of Readers), Mrs Ruth New (Development Officer - Children and Families), Ms Holli Bielby (Development Officer - Communications). The following Bishop's Specialist Advisers were also commissioned: Revd Beth Cope (New Housing), Revd James Shakespeare (Spirituality), Revd Sarah Gower (Ecumenical Matters), Sue Nelms (Disability), Revd Richard Darmody (Racial Justice), Revd David Newton (Climate) and Revd Imogan Nay (Climate).

Revd Canon Sarah Gower, Chair of the House of Clergy, in the Chair

- Apologies for Absence received** House of Clergy 18 House of Laity 15
Also received from the Chair of the House of Clergy, Canon Simon Kershaw, and the Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel, Mr Jon Chapman
- The inclusion of the Bishop of Ely's responses to the questions raised at the meeting of Diocesan Synod on 11 March 2023 was requested from the floor. Further adjustments to terminology in the text of the minutes from the 11 March 2023 meeting were requested. There were no additional **Matters Arising** and no questions raised under SO86.
- Safeguarding Update:** Ms Rebecca Boswell, Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, presented the Annual Report for 2022 from the Safeguarding Team. See attached at Appendix 1
- Presidential Address:** At his last meeting of Diocesan Synod before moving to the Diocese of Lincoln, the Bishop of Ely reflected on the flourishing of God's Church in the Diocese of Ely. He voiced his grateful thanks for the generosity and giving through Ministry Share and through membership of the Parish Giving Scheme. In his closing words, he urged those present to find the energy to reach across boundaries and to be visible people of God.
- Business of the Ely Diocesan Board of Finance:** Canon Tim Walters introduced Adam Halsey, haysmacintyre, the Diocese of Ely's auditors who presented the findings from the annual audit.

Mr Halsey reported that the annual audit was clean and that the Diocese's accounts were satisfactory, with excellent budgetary controls, management and governance. He stated that EDBF had the best accounts management in any Diocese his company audited. The Annual Report and Accounts showed a small, although manageable, deficit and positively compared Ely's finances with other Dioceses where structural deficits were in place, but there was no room for complacency: structural deficits were to be avoided at all costs because they are difficult to remove without cuts in budget.

He noted that, while the UK is not close to the end of its financial problems, there was no current need to sell assets. He advised that the level of giving in 2022 was consistent with that from 2021. While the sector is challenging and small deficits are budgeted for 2023, and likely 2024, he has no concerns about EDBF. He advised that typographical errors in the Annual Report had been noted and would be corrected before submission. He confirmed that the Diocese of Ely/EDBF is a going concern and commended the Annual Accounts to the members of Synod.

Motion - to accept and approve 2022 Statutory Report and Annual Accounts (subject to amendment of typographical errors)

Proposed: Revd Lynda Davies

Seconded: Mr David Brock (Granta)

Agreed by the majority

Abstentions: Revd Dr Simon Taylor, Mrs Elizabeth Stazicker

The 2022 EDBF Statutory Accounts were therefore accepted.

Project Lancaster: Canon Tim Walters thanked Adam Evans and Jon Green, EDBF staff members, and the Working Group for their efforts with taking the project forward. Contracts have been exchanged and construction is expected to commence on 26 June 2023 with a completion of building works in February 2024. The building will then be fitted out, checked and tested before final commissioning. A local company, MJS, had been selected after a rigorous tender process. MJS offered a tight schedule for the building works and the best value for money.

A groundbreaking ceremony is planned for 29 June 2023 with Bishop Stephen present.

The net cost currently forecast is £3.35m and funds are not being taken from Ministry Share, but from the Diocesan Pastoral Account which can only be used for the purchase of buildings (for example parsonages or DBF property). The new office building will then be added to the Diocesan balance sheet as an asset. Bishop Woodford House is currently let to King's Ely and the rentals received are used to support the work of Education in the Diocese.

6. The Ven Richard Harlow, Archdeacon of Huntingdon & Wisbech, gave a presentation about **Deanery Development Planning** and introduced the discussion topic on *Principles and Practices of Stipendiary Deployment*.

7. Canon Paul Evans, Diocesan Secretary, gave an oral report to Synod about the most recent meeting of **Bishop's Council** where topics raised related to the central church's SMMI funding bids (Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment) and grant applications will be prepared in due course covering the Diocese's Mission and Ministry plans for New Communities plus funding and grant applications for the Children and Youth Work sectors and the development of new local and focal ministries.

8. **Vacancy in See:** subsequent to the move of Bishop Stephen to the Diocese of Lincoln, the Diocese of Ely will be in vacancy. The Bishop of Huntingdon will become the Acting Bishop of Ely until the 70th Bishop of Ely has taken up their role (likely early 2025). The Vacancy in See Committee has planned dates through Autumn 2023, culminating in a vote of six of their members to the Crown Nominations Commission. There is to be a public meeting on 30 October (over Zoom). A Diocese-wide questionnaire/survey to inform a Working Group in the preparation of the Diocese's Statement of Needs is under way.

The Chair of Synod, Revd Canon Sarah Gower thanked Bishop Stephen for his ministry, his guidance and advice and his participation in Diocesan matters in every sphere. On behalf of Diocesan Synod, she wished him farewell advising that his final service would take place on 16 July 2023 in Ely Cathedral.

The meeting closed with prayer and the Bishop's blessing at 9pm

Dates for 2023 meetings: 14 October (morning)

APPENDIX to Diocesan Synod minutes – 14 June 2023

Annual Report 2022: Safeguarding Team

The Diocese of Ely Safeguarding Team seeks to contribute to 'People Fully Alive: Ely 2025' in its strategic aims of developing healthy churches and serving the community. We aspire to strengthen and integrate good safeguarding practice within the culture of all those working, volunteering or worshipping across the Diocese.

Safeguarding Team

Rebecca Boswell - Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA)
Sharon Gage - Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (ADSA)
Sarah King - Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO)
Kelly Nott - Safeguarding Training Administrator
Lisa Pearson - Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (ADSA)
Jackie Williamson - Safeguarding Administrative Support

Over 2022, as COVID restrictions decreased, there has been more opportunity to work at the Diocesan Office where the Safeguarding Team has a dedicated office space. The Team's members now work in a hybrid capacity between home and office-based working.

Policy and Practice Guidance

All safeguarding work within the Diocese is undertaken within the context of Statutory and House of Bishop's Policy and Practice Guidance. The following Practice Guidance Documents have been published during the last 12 months:

Ukrainian Refugees (15.04.22)

It is noted that all current safeguarding Guidance is issued by the House of Bishops under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016.

Section 5 requires all authorised clergy, bishops, archdeacons, licensed readers and lay workers, churchwardens and parochial church councils to have "due regard" to Safeguarding Guidance issued by the House of Bishops. A duty to have "due regard" to Guidance means that the person under the duty is not free to disregard it but is required to follow it unless there are cogent reasons for not doing so. 'Cogent' for this purpose means clear, logical and convincing. Failure by a member of the clergy to have "due regard" to House of Bishops' Safeguarding Guidance is an act or omission which may constitute misconduct under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003. Failure by a Reader or lay worker to have due regard to House of Bishops' Safeguarding Guidance would be grounds for the revocation of that Reader's or lay worker's licence by the Bishop, and failure by a churchwarden or parochial church council could result in an investigation being carried out by the Charity Commission and the churchwarden or PCC members being disqualified as charity trustees.

The Safeguarding Code of Practice Measure (Factsheet Appendix A) came into force in March 2022, it replaces and strengthens the duty to have 'due regard' to House of Bishops' Safeguarding Guidance with a duty to comply with the requirements in a new safeguarding code of practice (the Code); and expands the list of "relevant persons", being those who must comply with the new Code's requirements. Each piece of House of Bishops' Safeguarding Guidance that was in place on 1 March 2022 remains in place with a duty to have 'due regard' until that guidance is replaced by Safeguarding Code of Practice.

Safeguarding Referrals

The Safeguarding Advisors provide advice, guidance, and leadership whenever concerns arise about the possible abuse of a child or adult at risk, in relation to allegations against church officers and where there are concerns in relation to adults posing a risk within congregations. Referrals include but are not limited to: disclosures from survivors of abuse (both current and non-current), allegations against an identified person, issues concerning a person who has been convicted of offences against children, safeguarding and welfare concerns raised by or about a member of a congregation, conduct issues relating to a member of the clergy, laity or volunteer, information arising from DBS applications, and so on.

Year	Number of referrals
2016	109
2017	131
2018	158
2019	188
2020	177
2021	215
2022	248

There were 248 referrals in 2022, an increase of 15% on the previous year.

Risk Assessments and Safeguarding Agreements

The church welcomes all, including those individuals who pose a potential risk to other people. Central to all safeguarding work are the holistic assessment of risk and the development of effective strategies to manage any identified risk. These are often complex, involving liaison with partner agencies in the community, such as probation and police.

At the end of 2022 there were 21 Safeguarding Agreements in place across the Diocese. The subject of the Agreement participates in this process and the Agreements are regularly reviewed and monitored. Where statutory agencies are involved, they participate in this process. The purpose of such Agreements is to protect all within the church community, including the subject. All Safeguarding Agreements are now informed by the Church of England Standard Risk Analysis and Assessment Template (STRAAT) and all new cases are now assessed using this template.

In 2022 there were 5 new STRAAT assessments completed, although one of these is now closed as a result of no further action being taken by the police. Of the 21 Safeguarding Agreements currently in place across the Diocese, 11 of them are subject to the previous Risk Management Plans and 10 have been risk assessed using the 2019 National STRAAT model. All of the Safeguarding Agreements were reviewed on a regular basis during 2022. We are currently waiting for the new Practice Guidance framework to be published in 2023, which will provide updated guidance on the risk assessment process, including a new risk assessment template.

Safer Recruitment and People Management

All church officers are required to be recruited in accordance with the Church of England's Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance (2021). The updated guidance introduced changes, including an increased focus on post-appointment support and management for staff and volunteers. This guidance also changed the requirement for DBS renewals from 5 to 3 yearly.

During 2022, 2105 DBS checks were undertaken across the Diocese, in comparison with 2021 where there were 1379. The significant increase is attributable to the change in renewal period and parishes re-opening activities following the effects of the pandemic. The ability to undertake virtual ID checks which was made available during the pandemic was withdrawn during 2022, placing a greater burden on the safeguarding team and Parish Safeguarding Officer's undertaking these checks where ID documents had to be viewed directly.

Year	DBS Disclosures
2016	999
2017	1192
2018	1692
2019	1525
2020	1082
2021	1379
2022	2105

The Diocesan Safeguarding Officer manages all the DBS accounts in parishes across the Diocese. Where safeguarding information is disclosed on a DBS certificate or Confidential Declaration, this must be assessed by the Safeguarding Team who will make a recommendation regarding the individual's appointment.

Safeguarding Training

The safeguarding training modules which apply mainly to employees and volunteers in our parishes are: *Basic Awareness* and *Foundations, Safer Recruitment and People Management and Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse* all of which are available online via the Church of England Training Portal. The national Safer Recruitment and Domestic Abuse training moved to online only training on the Portal during 2022, those modules having previously been delivered by the Safeguarding Team.

The Safeguarding Team continue to deliver the national *Leadership* and *Parish Safeguarding Officers Induction* training. Virtual safeguarding training via Zoom implemented during the pandemic has continued with in-person training re-starting from September 2022. Many participants feedback that they appreciate the convenience of accessing the training from home while others have expressed a preference for face-to-face training. The Safeguarding Team will continue to deliver both virtual and face-to-face training over 2023. However, the fact that fewer numbers of people can be trained per virtual course has increased the workload of the team.

Some people who have been personally affected by safeguarding issues have reflected that they have found attending safeguarding training problematic and distressing and, in those cases we are aware of, additional supports have been put in place to enable the person to access the training and in circumstances where training with support has not been possible, a pass has been issued for the training module.

Ely Safeguarding Team also deliver local bespoke training, briefing and workshops including Churchwardens Safeguarding Briefings and DBS Workshops.

Module	2021	2022
Basic Awareness	121	1507
Foundation (online)	731	1057
Leadership	344	386
Safer Recruitment	282	229
Domestic Abuse	268	1111
Parish Safeguarding Officer Induction	20	20

Ely Cathedral

There is a Service Level Agreement between the Diocesan Board of Finance and the Chapter of Ely Cathedral agreeing terms of the provision of safeguarding advice and support to the Cathedral by the Ely Diocesan Safeguarding Team. Lisa Pearson works for the Cathedral one day per week as Cathedral Safeguarding Advisor.

National Casework Management System

The Diocese of Ely was part of the planning and development group for the adoption of a casework management system of the Church of England and one of the first cohort of Dioceses along with Ely Cathedral to adopt the new National Casework Management System and our instance 'went live' in July 2022. An immense amount of work was undertaken to digitise all existing paper safeguarding records and files and migrate that information onto the new system. The system has enabled more effective record keeping and management oversight in relation to safeguarding cases across the Diocese.

Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP)

Ely DSAP has strong multi-agency and inter-departmental representation which allows robust discussion on safeguarding issues, drawing on a wide range of professional experience and expertise. It is also a supportive group, offering advice, guidance and quality assurance on policy and practice matters. Ely Safeguarding Team is very grateful for all the contributions to its work made by diocesan and partner-agency members of the DSAP.

Past Cases Review

The National Past Cases Review Overview Report was published in October 2022 and The Diocese of Ely published its Executive Summary at the same time.

Local recommendations identified from the Diocesan Report were addressed with an Action Plan overseen by a subgroup of the DSAP. In particular, it was identified that further quality assurance would be of benefit to inform the development of the support and care offered to victims and survivors of abuse across the Diocese.

There are twenty-six recommendations arising from the National Overview Report, the majority of which are relevant to national safeguarding team workstreams within the Church of England. Where recommendations are relevant locally these will be incorporated into the next Strategic Safeguarding Plan 2023-26.

Survivor Care Review

The Diocese of Ely is keen to demonstrate continuous improvement and development in its safeguarding measures and processes, and, through the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP), has undertaken an independent review of the identification and support afforded to victims and survivors.

An independent reviewer, thirtyone:eight, was commissioned in March 2022 to undertake this review. Throughout the process thirtyone:eight were particularly interested in speaking to those who have experienced survivor care through the Diocese of Ely to inform the Review.

The Diocese of Ely welcomed the findings of the Review, which identified Strengths, Aspirations, Challenges and Areas of Development. The Areas of Development identified a number of **recommendations** that will further improve upon the strong foundations of effective safeguarding processes that are already in place across the Diocese.

Support to Parishes

The Safeguarding Team continues to provide advice and support to parishes in relation to safeguarding concerns, safer recruitment, good practice, and training. We have had four virtual Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) meetings over the year. Our PSOs have largely welcomed the convenience of a virtual meeting and this has been reflected in high levels of attendance at these events. Ely Safeguarding Team note our appreciation for the vital contribution to safeguarding work by all PSOs.

The Safeguarding Team works with Parishes to support their compliance with House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance. Parishes who for a range of reasons are at risk of not having 'due regard' are offered Focussed Support. This process brings together the Safeguarding Team and Parish in a coordinated response to help parishes overcome their difficulties. Several parishes have been supported during 2022.

The Safeguarding Dashboard software is available free of charge to all parishes. Across the Diocese of Ely 74% of parishes are currently registered with the Dashboard in comparison with 60% at the end of 2021 and we continue to advocate that all parishes register for a Dashboard.

The developers of Safeguarding Dashboards have been working on a new set of tools to help parishes with safer recruitment and people management.

Safeguarding Hubs are being launched in four stages:

- Stage 1 - DBS and training records

- Stage 2 - Role descriptions
- Stage 3 - Safer recruitment
- Stage 4 - People management

The Diocese of Ely was one of the two Dioceses to launch the Safeguarding Hubs in December 2022.

Priority areas

During 2023 the Safeguarding Team are keenly anticipating the publication of the final version of the National Church of England Safeguarding Standards and Quality Assurance Framework, as this document will inform the next Strategic Safeguarding Plan. It is also understood that planning is underway nationally for a further round of Safeguarding Audits of all Dioceses and reviewing those National Safeguarding Standards will form the basis of those audits in each Diocese.

The Safeguarding Team will continue to support parishes in accordance with House of Bishop's existing Safeguarding Practice Guidance including the implementation of new Safeguarding Code of Practice Guidance as it is published.

Rebecca Boswell

March 2023

Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure 2021

Implementation fact sheet

1. What are the changes to the law made by the Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure 2021?

The Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure 2021 (the **2021 Measure**)¹:

- (a) replaces and strengthens the duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance with a duty to comply with the requirements in a new safeguarding code of practice (the **Code**); and
- (b) expands the list of "relevant persons", being those who must comply with the new Code's requirements.

The Code will be a user manual for those with safeguarding responsibilities in the Church, which sets out "requirements" which must be complied with by any relevant person that requirement applies to. The Code will also include guidance to explain how to comply with the requirements. The Code will make it clear what is a requirement and what is guidance.

2. Why have these changes been made?

The duty to have 'due regard' to safeguarding guidance was criticised by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (**IICSA**) for lacking clarity and not being generally understood. Amending this was one of the recommendations (no.2) in **IICSA's 2019 report** which were all welcomed by the Archbishops' Council and endorsed by the General Synod.

3. Who is a "relevant person" under the 2021 Measure?

The 2021 Measure extends the list of "relevant persons", being those who must comply with the Code from the list of those who had to have due regard to House of Bishops' Safeguarding Guidance in s.5 of the Safeguarding Measure 2016.

The "relevant persons" under the 2021 Measure are:

- (a) a clerk in Holy Orders who is authorised to officiate in accordance with the Canons;
- (b) an archbishop;
- (c) a diocesan, suffragan or assistant bishop;
- (d) an archdeacon;
- (e) a person who is licensed to exercise the office of reader or serve as a lay worker;
- (f) a churchwarden;
- (g) a parochial church council;
- (h) the Chapter of a cathedral;
- (i) the Diocesan Board of Education for a diocese;

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukcm/2021/3/contents/enacted>

- (j) the Diocesan Board of Finance for a diocese;
- (k) any other diocesan body as defined by section 19(1) of the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007;
- (l) a body established to carry out a mission initiative as defined by section 80(1) of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011;
- (m) a person who is an officer or member of staff of the Archbishops' Council, or who provide services to the Archbishops' Council, and whose work to any extent relates to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults;
- (n) a person who works (on any basis) in a diocese or parish, or at a cathedral or for the purposes of a mission initiative, and whose work to any extent relates to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

4. When will these changes come into force?

The Safeguarding Measure 2021 will come into force on 1 March 2022².

5. What is the status of the existing safeguarding guidance?

Each piece of House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance that is in place on 1 March 2022 remains in place until that guidance is replaced by a Code of Practice. In order for any part of the Code to be adopted, it must first undergo the consultation and approval processes set out in the 2021 Measure.

However, all "relevant persons" on the expanded list in the 2021 Measure will be required to have due regard to existing House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance from 1 March 2022.

If a "relevant person" does not have due regard to any House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance which continues in operation, it will be misconduct for the purposes of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003.

6. Where can I find the House of Bishops' safeguarding Guidance and the Code of Practice?

All of the existing House of Bishops' Safeguarding Guidance is currently available from the Church of England Safeguarding Policy and Guidance page. [Policy and practice guidance | The Church of England](#)

A new e-manual is being created which will, in due course, have the new Code and any Guidance in force uploaded onto it. [Safeguarding e-manual | The Church of England](#)

² [The Safeguarding \(Code of Practice\) Measure 2021 \(Commencement and Transitional Provision\) Order 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#).