

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for the Benefice of Bratton, Edington and Imber, Erlestoke and Coulston

This Policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council meetings held in: -

- Bratton on Wednesday 22 May 2019
- Erlestoke on Tuesday 28 May 2019
- Edington and Imber on Wednesday 15 May 2019
- Coulston on Wednesday 29 May 2019 and the **amendments marked in red** reflect changes in operation that were adopted at meetings held in the Parishes to review the policy on the following dates:
 - Bratton on 22 July 2025
- Erlestoke on Monday 28 April 2025
- Edington and Imber on Tuesday 6 May 2025
- Coulston on 8 August 2025.

The Church of England, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity, which comes directly from God's creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's recreation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

The Benefice of Bratton, Edington and Imber, Erlestoke and Coulston is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and affirms that the needs of children, or of people when they are vulnerable, are paramount.

The Benefice recognizes that none of us is invulnerable but that there is particular care needed for those whose vulnerability is increased by age, by situations, by disabilities or by a reduction in capacities. It is understood that this vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, and that it does not diminish our humanity but rather seeks to affirm the gifts and graces of all God's people.

This Policy addresses the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is intended to be a dynamic policy and to assist each Parish in providing a safe, supportive and caring environment for children, for young people, for vulnerable adults, for victims of abuse and for those affected by it.

The Benefice recognizes the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and understands that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual or institutional abuse or neglect. It takes seriously the issue of promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace. It acknowledges the effects that abuse may have on people and their development – including spiritual and religious development. It accepts its responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe in its care and that their dignity and right to be heard is maintained. It commits itself to respond without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, whether in the Church or in another context. It agrees to challenge the abuse of power by anyone in a position of trust. Where abuse has taken place, it accepts responsibility to support, listen to, and work for healing with victims, with offenders, with those who care about them and with communities.

The Benefice agrees to provide support, advice and training for ordained and lay people that will ensure they are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable.

The Benefice affirms and gives thanks for those who work with children and vulnerable adults and acknowledges the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding those who are using our premises.

Purpose of safeguarding policy.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children, young people and vulnerable adults that are in the care of the Benefice and using Benefice premises. The Policy should be read in conjunction with the **Church of England's Policy Statement *Promoting a Safer Church* (2017)** and policies and procedures adopted by the Diocese of Salisbury
<https://salisbury.anglican.org/workingforjustice/safeguarding/>

Appointments.

The parishes of the Benefice have appointed Safeguarding Representatives (PSOs) and the various PCCs support them in their roles in which they undertake to: -

1. support and advise the Rector, Parochial Church Councils and Church members in fulfilling their role;
2. provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues; and
3. to promote safeguarding best practice within the churches of the Benefice.

The PSOs are **Peter Roberts (Edington), Peter Sharland (Bratton), Louise Adams (Erlestoke) and Kate Linton (Coulston).**

Good Practice.

We believe that good practice means that:

1. All people are treated with respect and dignity.
2. Promotion of safeguarding is recognized to include undertaking those tasks which enable all God's people to reach their full potential. The Benefice will actively consider, at least annually, the extent to which it is succeeding in these areas.
3. Those who work on behalf of the Church do not meet or work alone with a child or vulnerable adult where the activity cannot be seen unless this is necessary for pastoral reasons, in which case a written note of this is made and kept, noting date, time and place of visit.
4. The Church premises are assessed for safety for children and vulnerable adults and a written risk assessment report is given annually to each Parochial Church Council. This will include fire safety precautions. The Church Council will consider the extent to which any level of risk can be reduced.
5. Any Church organized transport of children or vulnerable adults is checked to ensure the vehicle is suitable and insured, and the driver and escort are appropriate.

Appointment and training of Workers.

Workers (see definition page 4) will be appointed having been appropriately recruited in line with Church of England Safer Recruitment Practice (June 2021) <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance> . This will include completion of a satisfactory Self-Declaration form and DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) disclosure.

Each individual PCC will be responsible for ensuring that workers and other relevant personnel within their Parish conform with the Diocese of Salisbury Safeguarding Training, Learning and Development Policy (July 2016).

Other training needs will be considered at each worker's annual review, which will be conducted by the Rector and their churchwarden(s) together.

Lay Pastoral Assistants.

In terms of safeguarding LPAs will be supported in their role with the provision of safeguarding training - before commissioning, within six months of commissioning, and follow up training every three years.

Guidelines for working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

PCC members will ensure they have up to date safeguarding information through accessing the Diocese of Salisbury Safeguarding website.

Other groups using Church premises.

Where the building is hired for outside use the person signing the letting agreement will be required to agree to comply with the terms of this Policy. The person responsible for the letting will consider the various users of the building in making lettings.

Events with Church groups off the premises.

Adequate staffing will be ensured for such events. Notification of the event will be given to the Rector and Churchwarden(s) and the required insurance cover will be provided.

Complaints Procedure.

It is hoped that complaints can generally be dealt with internally. If a complaint is made to another person it should be passed to the Rector or the Benefice Safeguarding Representative who will arrange to meet with the complainant and resolve the complaint. If the complaint cannot be resolved consideration will be given to invoking the Diocesan Safeguarding Complaints Policy (Sept. 2016).

Review.

This Policy will be reviewed annually by each Parochial Church Council.

Signed **[Signed copy held by Benefice Safeguarding Officer]**
Reverend M Wieck, Honorary Associate Priest,
Benefice of Bratton, Edington & Imber, Coulston, and Erlestoke.

Date...10 viii 25

Key concepts and definitions.

Vulnerable adults Any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of her or himself, or to protect her or himself from significant harm or exploitation.

Safeguarding and protecting children and vulnerable adults from maltreatment, preventing impairment of their health, and ensuring their safe and effective care.

Adult/child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm, including neglect.

Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, in a community or in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons unknown to the child or vulnerable adult, by strangers, or by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Workers The Benefice of Bratton, Edington and Imber, Erlestoke and Coulston recognize the following roles as 'workers': -

Choir Directors	Bell Tower Captains
Sunday School Leaders	Youth Group Leaders
Designated Parish Safeguarding Leads	Open the Book Team members

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Those people recruited within the Benefice as "Workers" will be required, before their appointment, to complete a self-declaration form and to apply for an enhanced DBS search. These checks will be repeated **every three years** during the appointment.

Joanna Robertson 14 May 2019
as amended, Peter Roberts, February 2025