

AGM Safeguarding Report for RTM for April 2025 covering the previous year.

Sadly, yet again, safeguarding issues within the Church of England have made national headlines during the last twelve months. Following the much publicised Independent Makin Review into the church's handling of allegations of abuse by John Smyth, the Archbishop of Canterbury announced his resignation in November 2024, and left his post in January 2025. This has been a huge trauma for the C of E and is leading to big changes to its national safeguarding structure & also to much soul searching within the wider organisation.

Against this backdrop, within RTM we have continued our task of trying to ensure a welcoming mission to all who come through our doors while also keeping every one safe. We have used the policies and procedures contained in the Southwark Diocesan 'A Safe Church' to try to ensure the balance of need and risk.

The Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSO) from all three churches have worked collaboratively together with the clergy, youth minister, church committees and PCC to raise awareness of safeguarding, and respond to any concerns.

PSO's

St Matthias Richard Wiszniewski

St John. Helen Kelsey (assisted by Rob Smith & Veronica Joyce)

St Mary's Judy Wright

During the year there have been several situations where we have sought help from the Diocesan safeguarding team and worked with them to find solutions to more complex issues. Because of pressure on the resources of this team they have cancelled their out of hours service.

Towards the end of 2024 there were significant changes within RTM with both Canon Wilma Roest (Team Rector & St Mary's Vicar), and the youth minister leaving.

The implications for safeguarding were that during the Vacancy, responsibility at Mary's lay with the PSO and church wardens. At ST John's and St Matthias there was no change.

The lack of a Youth lead across the three churches is a loss as far as safe and consistent recruitment of all volunteers with children and young people is concerned and a potential risk.

All DBS checks are undertaken in accordance with the guidelines and are now valid for 3 years. Currently it is the PSO of St Mary's who acts as the DBS administrator for RTM but guidance has been sought from the diocese as to which other role could incorporate this task.

Keeping training for all roles up to date is a constant demand.

We had anticipated that during 2024 there would be a long overdue audit to complete but this was delayed and expected in early 2025.

It is recognised that it is only by being vigilante, observing the procedures & working together that can we keep everyone safe -- children, young people and vulnerable adults .

We must not get complacent as we ensure we love our neighbours as ourselves.

JUDY WRIGHT PSO St Mary's

April 2025