**Why we need to have a Parish safeguarding policy and a Parish Safeguarding Officer**

It is the legal responsibility of each PCC to fulfil their duty of care towards all those present during worship, all church sponsored activities and activities in church buildings. In practice, this means that each parish must adopt an appropriate safeguarding policy, appoint a safeguarding officer, and generally ensure that all of its practices and procedures comply with that policy and with relevant law.

The Ecclesiastical Insurance Group has made it clear that their insurance cover is only valid where national safeguarding policy and practice guidance is being followed. The Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, requires all clergy authorised to officiate, other relevant Church Officers (e.g. churchwardens) and PCCs to have ‘due regard’ to safeguarding policy and practice 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 such guidance unless there are cogent reasons for not doing so.

With the Incumbent, the PCC will appoint at least one appropriately experienced designated Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the Incumbent and PCC. This PSO should be:

* a lay person,
* either be a member of the PCC (elected or co-opted) or have the right to attend the PCC’s meetings, and
* should report at least annually on the implementation of the policy within the parish.

The PSO is also usually the DBS administrator for church workers with children or vulnerable adults. If not, the PCC should appoint another individual who sits on the PCC to undertake that role.