

Footsteps, church @4 and Safeguarding Report

Footsteps

Footsteps (St Mary's Sunday School) met in December before closing for the time being. There had been a membership of two regular attendees for some time with others joining for the odd meeting. It was decided that with commitments growing, swimming lessons, triathlon and numerous other pass-times which have sprung up on Sundays, church@4 would become the service for young and their families.

church@4

Church@4 meets on the third Sunday of each month and has a variable membership. This has mainly been because of the atrociously wet weather we have all been experiencing.

We have had as many as 14 present and as few as 5.

After a short story (biblical or based on a Christian theme), prayers and hymns, the young people have a craft session and adults have coffee/tea and cake. The children have theirs after crafting and hand washing! The recent theme and work is displayed on the board in the children's corner.

With the meetings being only once a month this does relieve the time-pressure on young families. All ages are welcome with Kathryn especially enjoying the craft sessions and showing her expertise in clay work.

Safeguarding

Over the last year there has only been one incidence of disclosure which was brought to my attention. This was an historical allegation against a person who had long ago left this church. The allegation has been thoroughly investigated by the Chichester Safeguarding Team and those working in the area into which that person had moved. There was found to be no basis whatsoever in the allegation and no element of truth.

There have been no other/new disclosures or reported concerns since the last APCM.

Over the past year it has been ensured that all PCC members are fully DBS checked. Those working on the PVT also hold DBS certification as do most of those giving Home Communion. This latter list is in the process of being completed because it is a new initiative. Previously such a role was not eligible for checks. This church has long supported DBS checking for all those in such important roles.

Both Choir Masters/Organists hold full DBS certificates, as do all clergy and the captain of bellringing/Bell Tower. Our Bell Ringers have long had extensive health and safety and safeguarding advice/procedures in place.

On February 17th we were lucky in having one of the Chichester Safeguarding Team Presenters to head a Safeguarding course for our church. It was originally for PCC members and PVT members, because of the numbers involved and a limit of 20 attendees was the preferred size of the group. We therefore did not advertise it widely. We had 17 attendees. I was extremely grateful to Dennis Cowdrey and Martyn Freeman for setting up the IT equipment and for Jacqui and John Peal and Sheila and Andrew Boulton for loaning us the equipment.

Safeguarding now forms part of SQP (Simple Quality Protects) which is a Chichester initiative for ensuring Churches in the Diocese are safe. This incorporates Health and Safety and Den and I have worked together to ensure all the aspects of SQP have been covered.

We had to be inspected at the beginning of March and I am pleased to say we passed. Our Certificate should be on its way. This is only stage 1! The rest has not been written yet but we have been told it will probably involve the PCC to a greater degree!

Our thanks to Barbara Buchanan for organising First Aid as a course and then training on the DeFib. The team of examiners were impressed we had a DeFib.

The small brochures and pocket hand-outs for safety in our church, continue to be available at the back of church. I will replenish when they all disappear.

Jackie Lee, March 2020