



## Church Safeguarding Policy 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for

**Louth Methodist Church**

For the Methodist Connexional year 2023/2024

This policy was agreed at a Church Council held on

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023

### **Philosophy**

The Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's re-creation 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.

**Louth Methodist Church** is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable and at risk are paramount.

**Louth Methodist Church** recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether by disabilities or by reduction in capacities or by their situation. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish our humanity and 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. It is intended to support the Church in being a safe supportive and caring community for children, young people, vulnerable adults, for survivors of abuse, for communities and for those affected by abuse.

**Louth Methodist Church** fully agrees with the statement reiterated in Creating Safer Space 2007:

"As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages."

**Louth Methodist Church** recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual, discriminatory, domestic or institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media or human trafficking (slavery). It acknowledges the effects these 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 accepts its responsibility to support, listen to and work for healing with survivors, offenders, communities and those who care about them. It takes seriously the issues of promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

### Commitment

The **Louth Methodist Church** 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 commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.

- *As a church, we will use the District Responding Well flowchart 2023 when responding to those concerns.*

Ensure the **IMPLEMENTATION** of Connexional Safeguarding Policy July 2023, government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

- *As a church, we will ensure that advice is sought to comply with policies and procedures laid down by the Methodist Church 2023 and the Lincolnshire Methodist District 1st September 2023.*

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

- *As a church, we will ensure appropriate Foundation and Advanced training is undertaken as appropriate i.e. On Line modules or face to face as directed by the DSO. Safer recruitment procedures will continue to be followed as per the District Safeguarding Policy 2023 and any future updated policy.*

**AFFIRM** and give thanks for those who work with children and vulnerable adults and also acknowledge the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

- *As a church, we will support those in such roles at all times and pray for them in meeting the challenges and responsibilities of their work.*

The **Louth Methodist Church** Council

will put in place:

- Connexional and District Safeguarding information displayed on designated spaces in the church
- Emergency contact numbers and those of safeguarding officers;
- Safer recruitment of all volunteers;
- Commitment to Creating Safer Spaces training and Advanced training as appropriate;
- Use of letting agreements when outside groups use our premises;
- Risk assessments for special events or activities;
- Processes to allow anyone who wishes to make a complaint by contacting the Minister/Superintendent or the Chair of District if about the Minister/Superintendent.

In particular:

- The church will affirm and support the Church Safeguarding Officer in carrying out required responsibilities – see Appendix. This person will be invited to be a part of the church council, either by being a member or invitation to speak about safeguarding matters and updates;
- The church will seek the advice of the District Safeguarding Officer in making appropriate referrals to the Charity Commission when a safeguarding concern has arisen.

**Commitment to the support and care of victims and survivors.**

The church will give the utmost care, respect and support to those who have been hurt in the life of the church. It will seek to offer safe spaces for those who wish to share their experiences and/or take them seriously and seek advice at the earliest opportunity.

**The Church Safeguarding Officer is**..... Paul Fox.....

In their absence, cover will be provided by..... Senior Steward.....

**Key concepts and definitions**

- (i) A child is anyone who has not yet reached his or her eighteenth birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, a member of the armed forces, in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.
- ii) Adults who are vulnerable: Any adult aged 18 or over who, due to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves.
- iii) Safeguarding and protecting children or adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.

- iv) 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.
- v) Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, in a community and in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child or adult or by strangers; by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Dated ..... 14.9.23 .....

Signed ..... M. Aspinall ..... Chair of Church Council

### **Appendix**

#### ***The responsibilities of the Church Safeguarding Officer are to:***

- i) support and advise the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles
- ii) provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues i.e. to follow the District Flowchart;
- iii) liaise with the circuit and District safeguarding officer;
- iv) promote safeguarding best practice within the local church with the support of circuit ministers
- v) ensure that all safeguarding training that is required is undertaken by those in post and appropriate records kept and made available
- vi) attend training and meetings organised to support the role
- vii) oversee safeguarding throughout the whole life of the church (e.g. lettings, groups, property etc.)
- viii) report to the Church Council at least annually
- ix) Take part in risk assessments for the church building and/or special events