

## FRIENDS OF KENT CHURCHES

### SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The objects of the Friends are to provide financial support for church buildings in Kent and to encourage people interested in such buildings to study and visit them. The first object is achieved through the Friends' grants programme to churches and chapels for repairs, funded by the annual Kent Ride and Stride, donations and legacies. The second is met through a regular programme for members of lectures and church visits.

The Friends aspire to a fair, open and positive culture in which the dignity of every individual is respected and in which all feel that they can report concerns about abuse of vulnerable adults and children, confident that they will be listened to and that there will be a suitable response.

The charity's Executive Committee has reviewed the level of risk of abuse which could arise in the course of the charity's activities and believes it to be very low:

- i. the Friends' organise 6 or 7 events a year for members which are usually attended by a minimum of 30-40 people and often many more. It is very rare for children to attend and if they were to do so it would be under the supervision of a member of their family. Some vulnerable adults may attend but in such a large group there would be few if any opportunities for abusive behaviour. Occasionally, members of the Committee or other members of the Friends may give lifts to vulnerable members wanting to attend our church tours and there may be some slight risk from this;
- ii. the Friends' Executive Committee meets 4 times a year and meetings usually consist of at least 10 people, none of whom currently are vulnerable adults. Again, in such a group setting opportunities for abuse rarely arise.
- iii. different considerations arise in relation to Ride and Stride which are considered below.

In view of the low level of risk, the Executive Committee have decided that it is unnecessary to carry out DBS checks on the Friends' officers (there are no paid staff).

Notwithstanding the low level of risk, if a member or anyone else suspects that abusive behaviour has occurred in the setting of the Friends' activities, they are urged to report the matter to our lead person on safeguarding. Paul Britton (telephone: 01732 365794; email: [pauljbritton@live.co.uk](mailto:pauljbritton@live.co.uk)).

In the event of such a report:

- i. we will ask for consent to share the information; if consent is refused, we may nevertheless share it with the appropriate authorities if it seems credible and serious;

- ii. we will make a written record of what we have been told;
- iii. we will not approach the person against whom the allegation has been made;
- iv. rather we will report the matter to the appropriate authority, the Social Services department of Kent County Council in the case of children and the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board for adults.

#### *Kent Ride and Stride*

This is an annual fund-raising event, in which people are sponsored to cycle or walk between churches to raise money both for their own church or chapel and for the Friends to distribute through their grants programme. It is run by an allied organisation of the Friends with its own organising committee. More than 1000 people across the county take part in the event each year, many of them children. Most participants are in families or groups based on their local church and all who take part do so on behalf of their church. The safeguarding arrangements are therefore those of the church from which the participants come and any suspicion of abuse occurring during the event should be reported to the safeguarding lead at the church concerned.

#### *Conclusion*

Any member who has concerns about this policy or the charity's implementation of it is encouraged to contact the chair of the Executive Committee or any of the committee's members.

This policy statement will be reviewed in the light of experience and, in any event, at intervals of no longer than 5 years.

September 2020