



SAFEGUARDING IN RINGING

Ann White
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Dave Bassford

- Learnt to ring at Gotham, ring of 5 in South Notts in 1980
- Member of the St Paul's Cathedral Guild of Ringers and St Dunstan's Stepney
- Offices held include Master and later President of University of Bristol Society, Ringing Master at Bristol Cathedral, secretary of St Paul's Guild for 6 years, currently Master of MCALDG
- Favourite thing about ringing: teaching, especially early stages of change ringing and basic conducting

- A qualified teacher with 20 years experience in secondary and SEN
- Designated member of staff for safeguarding in multiple settings totalling 10 years
- Freelance consultant in education, mainly in SEN, elective home education and safeguarding.

Ann White

- Taught to ring by my father, Ken Lawson, at St Oswald, West Hartlepool
- Currently a member of the St Lawrence Society, Towcester and the St Paul's Cathedral Guild of Ringers
- Offices held include Master of the Leicester University Society, first secretary of the National 12 Bell Striking Contest Committee, Assistant Secretary of the St Paul's Cathedral Guild of Ringers
- Taught my daughter and her brother, among others, to ring – the ringing achievement which gives me greatest pleasure.

- A qualified Social Worker, now retired.
- Spent 25 year in Children's Services including Fostering and Adoption and Child Protection
- A social work consultant and trainer for over 20 years
- Training Manager for a Local Safeguarding Children Board for 3 years

Health warning

- Whilst we would hope that anything discussed in this session would be treated with appropriate respect and confidentiality by participants, please avoid saying anything which could identify individuals or specific towers, associations etc.
- It's possible that some of the things raised in this training may be upsetting for some participants.
- We fully understand that you may wish to briefly step out of the training or leave altogether. Please do not feel the need to explain or apologise if you wish to do so.
- A good range of support services can be found here:
<https://www.channel4.com/4viewers/child-abuse-or-harm>

Scope

- We are very aware that there are a number of towers which do not fall under the Church of England or under UK law.
- Most of our dealings, however, are with the C of E and its churches and that is our focus both this evening and in our work in general.
- We are happy to do our best to help in other situations, not least signposting places to go for further help.
- **The basic precepts of good practice in safeguarding are universal.**

Safeguarding and the CCCBR

- Ann and Dave took over as CCCBR Safeguarding Officers earlier this year.
- Chris Mew, our predecessor, had done an enormous amount of work in his years doing this role.
- Almost all current policies and procedures were developed by Chris in association with the Church and other appropriate groups and all ringers owe him a huge debt of gratitude for his efforts.

The Church and Ringing

- The church doesn't always have a great understanding of how ringers can operate across multiple towers, counties, association and even countries or the fact that individuals can ring "under" different societies (which may or may not be CCCBR affiliated) or none.
- Hard to fit ringing into the Church's safeguarding framework.
- The church is starting to see the CCCBR as the "umbrella group" for all ringers but this work is ongoing.

Where do we currently stand with society safeguarding leads?

- Mixed, with some even having no training.[L T L]
[SEP SEP]
- The Central Council has no control and can only advise.[L T L]
[SEP SEP]
- We plan to provide some training for society safeguarding leads in due course
- We advise that as a minimum all safeguarding leads in societies should have done training up to C02/Leadership level

Key message in the Parish Safeguarding Handbook

- The welfare of the child, young person and vulnerable adult is at all times paramount and takes precedence over all other considerations.
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser(DSA) must be consulted whenever a safeguarding concern of any kind arises in your parish.
- Safeguarding is part of our core faith and an integral feature of Christian life in our parish churches

Commonly raised issues

- DBS checks –
 - *Who decides who should have one and at what level?*
 - *What if people refuse?*
 - *Name/gender changes?*
 - *What if the DBS returns matters of concern?*

Commonly raised issues

- Training
 - *Who decides should undertake this?*
 - *What if people refuse to take part?*
 - *Local circumstances.*
 - *Refresher training.*
 - *Record keeping.*

Commonly raised issues

- The “Right to Ring”

- *Ringers have no right to ring.*
- *The only legal right is the right to attend for common worship.*

- *The Central Council also has no right of audience with the Church of England or its safeguarding team.*
- *The CCCBR is making great strides in forming strong working relationships with the Church in all areas but the fact remains that the Church doesn't really have a great understanding of how ringing “works”.*

Responsibility

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- But the statutory leadership, management and administration lies with the parish or the diocese, not ringers.
- CCCBR Safeguarding Officers' role is to encourage compliance, support and advise and liaise with the C of E when appropriate.
- Churches and dioceses often do things differently which can make it difficult to work nationally. For example not all dioceses allow portability of DBS clearance between parishes.

Dealing with Incidents or Concerns

- All incidents should in the first instance be reported to Parish Safeguarding Officers who will then liaise with Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors and/or central church authorities.
- It is not generally our business to raise specific issues ourselves. If we were sufficiently concerned and that it appeared nothing was being done, then discussion with a DSA would be reasonable.
- Numbers of cases are very small and very few of these relate to behaviour in the tower. More often ringing appears as a grooming opportunity with behaviour of concern occurring elsewhere.

Training

- The Parish Safeguarding Handbook states the following (p17):
 - *All ringers should do C0 (Safeguarding Basic Awareness) and C1 (Safeguarding Foundations)*
 - *“Bell tower captains” should also do C2 (Leadership)*
- Churches may make the decision about what training they wish people to do but most follow the above.
- We are not able to override this or “settle arguments” between ringers and their church safeguarding officer.
- We advise that Association/Society safeguarding officers and those who have a significant role in working with children and young people in ringing should complete all training up to C2

Building relationships

- It's good practice that all ringers should have a personal relationship with key people in the church, even if they do not attend services.
- Tower leaders and officials especially should do so and should also ensure they have a good relationship with the church safeguarding officer.
- Ringers should be included in all communications from the church about safeguarding.
- You may need to remind them now and again that ringing is part of the church and comes under their remit.

Parish Safeguarding Handbook

- Contains a wealth of information and the answer to many questions you may have.
- Sets out minimum expectations and best practice, eg training requirements
- We encourage all tower leaders and officials read and maintain a working knowledge of this document.

Vulnerable adults

- “A person 18 years or over who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.”
- Ringing benefits from attracting a vast range of characters
- Sometimes, people who are seen to be very different can be the target for unkind or humiliating treatment
- While this form of bullying is unacceptable under any circumstances, some adults are less able to protect themselves from it than others
- It is the responsibility of us all to be alert to any signs of such behaviour and deal with it

Safeguarding Do's and Don't's

Do:

- The training – at least C0 and C1
- Set ground rules for everyone's behaviour
- Treat everyone with respect and kindness – you are a role model
- Have 2 adults present when teaching
- Have parental permission in writing for all activities
- Stay alert to the possibility of bullying – including by young people to each other
- Get to know your parish/diocesan Safeguarding Officer
- Be aware of your local safeguarding policies (Parish/Guild or Association)

Don't

- Tolerate 'jokes' aimed at other people
- Tolerate personal comments
- Promise to keep secrets
- Ignore inappropriate behaviour
- Ignore, or overreact, to any disclosure of abuse

Discussion topic

St John's, is a church in a small village in rural England. The ringers have excellent relationships with the vicar, churchwardens and the parish safeguarding officer.

They have one learner, Alex, who is 12 years old who comes to practice an hour early for handling lessons before the rest of the band arrive.

The tower captain and deputy TC attend these sessions together to ensure that there are two people, one male and one female, present. They usually meet Alex at the church gate and usually have a little chat with the Alex's mum who is "taxi driver"

One evening, mum is in a hurry and drops Alex off then has to leave.

On this particular evening, the tower captain has been delayed, leaving the deputy TC there alone with Alex.

What would you do in this situation?

The impact of CoVID

- Increased social isolations among ringers.
- Some ringers may be suffering mental health difficulties.
- Significant increase in the use of social media and group video chat.
- Lack of regular contact with trusted adults.

Other issues

- Social media; online ringing
- Bullying
- Ex-offenders
- Protecting adults from allegations
- Abuse by young people
- Moral duty of care to all children and vulnerable adults, including those who may be suffering or at risk in other areas of their lives.
- Whistleblowing

Resources - Church of England

- <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/promoting-safer-church-safeguarding>
- <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf>

Resources - CCCBR

- <https://cccbr.org.uk/safeguarding/>
- https://cccbr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/SM_Safeguarding_PlusAppendices_2019_Ver_2-Guide-plus-appendices-1.pdf
- https://cccbr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Sample_Safeguarding_Policy_2019_Ver_0.docx

Resources - Online Safety

- www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/

Resources - others

- www.childline.org.uk/
- www.channel4.com/4viewers/child-abuse-or-harm
- learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection